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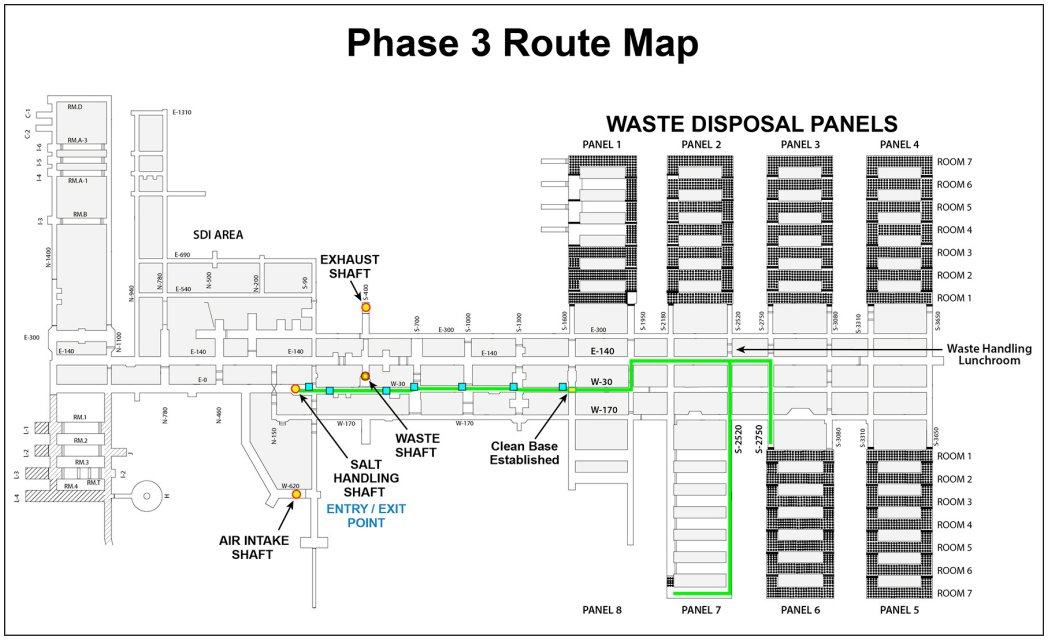
WIPP UPDATE: April 23, 2014

Re-entry teams access Room 7

WIPP employees re-entered Room 7 of Panel 7 today in an attempt to determine the location and source of the February 14 radiological release in the underground facility. Room 7 is where the most recent contact-handled transuranic waste disposal activities occurred, making it the most likely location of the event.

The day began with two advance support teams entering the WIPP underground facility to establish a clean base of operations at the Waste Handling Lunchroom, located on the non-disposal side of the mine (see map below). This area had already been surveyed during earlier entries and no radiological contamination was found.



A smaller discovery team, each wearing anti-contamination clothing and air breathing apparatus, then entered Panel 7 to check air quality, ground conditions, and for any contamination as they moved toward the columns of waste containers in Room 7.

The discovery team found and evaluated contamination levels by the exhaust drift in Room 6 and Room 7, but did not see any visible damage among the first few rows of containers. They did not have time to examine all waste containers in the room; the discovery team's time in the mine was limited to avoid heat concerns in the protective clothing.

The source of the release was not identified. DOE and NWP are examining all of the information from today's entry to determine the next activities during future entries to determine the location and cause of the February 14 radiological release.

Community Meetings Scheduled

April 23 – The City of Carlsbad and DOE will co-host a meeting featuring updates on WIPP recovery activities. The meeting will be held today at 5:30 p.m. Location: Carlsbad City Council Chambers, 101 N. Halagueno Street. Live streaming of the weekly meetings can be seen at http://new.livestream.com/rrv/.