

# DOE NEWS

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## **1,000<sup>TH</sup> DRUM RETRIEVED FROM TRENCHES**

Fluor Hanford workers have safely retrieved the 1,000<sup>th</sup> drum of suspect transuranic waste (TRU) from trenches on the Hanford Site.

Since retrieval operations began in October 2003, the retrieval rate has steadily grown as workers gain experience and additional resources were mobilized. Workers retrieved 144 drums by the end of December, 435 drums by the end of January, and an additional 565 drums this month. The 55-gallon drums contain contaminated debris, tools, clothing, and other materials.

Between 1970 and 1988, the drums were stacked on an asphalt pad, covered with plywood, draped with tarps, and then covered with dirt when placed in the trenches. Once workers unearth the drums and pull them one-by-one from the stack, each drum is visually inspected for corrosion, dents, or bulges. The storage records for the drums are reviewed to determine whether the drum contains TRU or mixed low-level waste. If necessary, nondestructive assay is performed to verify which category the waste falls in. In addition, some drums must also have filtered venting devices installed to release any flammable gasses that may have built up. Finally, the drums are then shipped to the Central Waste Complex, a warehouse-type storage facility in the middle of the site. Drums containing mixed low-level waste are treated and then disposed in an onsite lined disposal facility. If the drums contain TRU, they're processed, certified, and will eventually be shipped to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico for permanent disposal.

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