



Nevada Site Office News

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Thunderstorms Cause Power Outage to U1a Complex

Intense thunderstorm activity in the east-central part of the Nevada Test Site has knocked out power to the U1a complex stranding 57-people underground. These individuals are in no danger and are sheltered in refugee chambers.

Test Site electrical maintenance personnel are on scene and are working to restore power to the facility.

More information will be provided as it becomes available.

The U1a Complex is an underground laboratory consisting of horizontal tunnels, each about one half mile in length, where experiments supporting the nation's nuclear stockpile are conducted. The U1a Complex is mined at the base of a vertical shaft approximately 960-feet below ground surface. The vertical shaft is equipped with a mechanical hoist for personnel and equipment access while another vertical shaft, about 1,000 feet away, provides cross ventilation instrumentation and utility access, and emergency exits.

The underground U1a Complex is the location for subcritical experiments. Subcritical experiments use chemical high explosives to generate high pressures that are applied to nuclear weapon materials. The configuration and quantities of explosives and nuclear materials are such that no nuclear explosion can occur. Because there is no nuclear explosion, subcritical experiments are consistent with the U.S. nuclear testing moratorium.

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