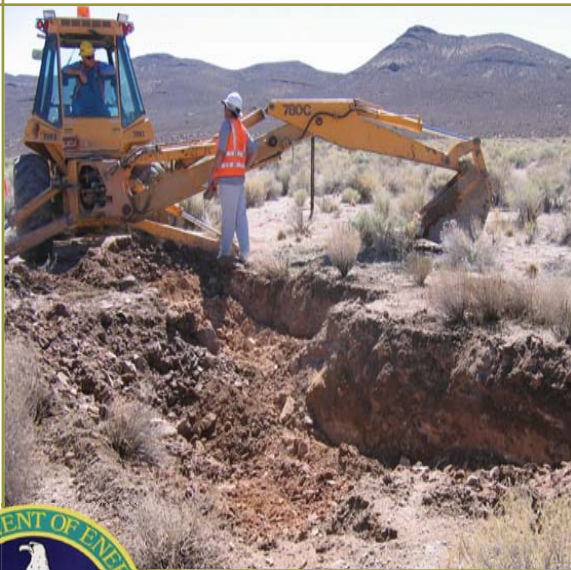


ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT



How is the public kept informed about EM activities?

EM has a staff dedicated to public outreach activities which includes the development and distribution of fact sheets, publications, news releases and exhibits. EM not only keeps the public informed, but also offers the opportunity to participate through the Community Advisory Board (CAB) and considers recommendations from the CAB. The CAB is comprised of volunteers from Southern Nevada who review EM activities and provide stakeholder feedback and recommendations. More information on the CAB, including meeting details, is located at <http://www.ntscab.com>.



In 1950, President Truman established the Nevada Proving Ground, now known as the Nevada Test Site (NTS), to perform nuclear weapons testing activities. In support of national defense initiatives, a total of 928 atmospheric and underground nuclear weapons tests were conducted at the NTS between 1951 and 1992, when President George H. Bush imposed a moratorium on nuclear weapons testing.

How is the U.S. Department of Energy addressing the environmental legacy of historic nuclear testing in Nevada?

The U.S. Department of Energy established an Environmental Management (EM) Program at the Nevada Site Office to address the legacy of contamination resulting from the effects of various historic nuclear activities conducted at the NTS and the Nevada Test and Training Range.

For further information about the Environmental Management program contact:

U.S. Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Nevada Site Office
Office of Public Affairs
P.O. Box 98518
Las Vegas, NV 89193-8518
(702) 295-3521
nevada@nv.doe.gov
<http://www.nv.doe.gov>

DOE/NV—1058 REV1
November 2007



Environmental Management

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Characterizing and cleaning up locations where radioactive and non-radioactive contamination resulted from historic nuclear testing are key components of the EM mission. These restoration activities focus on:

- Groundwater, soil and on-site infrastructure contamination from historic nuclear testing
- Radioactive and hazardous waste management and disposal
- Environmental planning, compliance and monitoring

What is the U.S. Department of Energy doing to address the groundwater contamination resulting from 828 historic underground nuclear tests?

Numerous wells are continually tested both on and off the Nevada Test Site and information is gathered to assist in determining where the contamination is located. To date no groundwater contamination resulting from historic nuclear tests has been detected off the Nevada Test Site. The U.S. Department of Energy is working with the State of Nevada to identify contaminant boundaries and implement an effective, long-term monitoring system since there is currently no technology available that would allow for the cleanup of deep, extensive groundwater contamination.



Workers take a water sample from a well drilled in the northwest portion of Yucca Flat - an area on the Nevada Test Site where hundreds of underground nuclear tests were conducted.

What happens to the buildings, facilities, and shops no longer in use that are contaminated from past Nevada Test Site projects?

The hazardous and radioactive contamination found in the historic Nevada Test Site infrastructure must be characterized and cleaned up in accordance with the Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order. Sometimes the contaminants can be easily removed and, in some cases, portions of or entire facilities must be demolished and properly disposed.



Heavy equipment is used to dismantle Test Cell A - a contaminated facility located in the southwest portion of the Nevada Test Site used for nuclear rocket development during the 1960s.

Is the soil near the above ground nuclear test locations radioactively contaminated?

Yes, contamination has been identified in portions of the surface soil near historic atmospheric tests. The EM Program evaluates the extent of soil contamination resulting from atmospheric nuclear tests, safety experiments, and earth-cratering experiments. Some interim remediation activities have been conducted and will continue until a final closure strategy has been agreed upon by the state regulators.

What is low-level radioactive waste and where does it come from?

The low-level radioactive waste disposed at the Nevada Test Site is generated by cleanup activities at U.S. Department of Energy and U.S. Department of Defense sites across the country. Examples of this waste include construction debris,

scrap metal, soil, and equipment. Some of this waste includes hazardous constituents which makes it mixed radioactive waste. The waste is disposed in engineered pits and trenches.

Continuous monitoring of air, groundwater, and soil serves as an early detection system in the unlikely event that contamination migrates from the immediate



Workers place a metal box containing mixed low-level radioactive waste in a disposal cell at the Area 5 Radioactive Waste Management Complex located in the southeast portion of the Nevada Test Site.

What is transuranic waste and where is it disposed?

Transuranic waste contains more than 100 nanocuries per gram of man-made radioactive elements heavier than uranium with half-lives greater than 20 years (it is not high-level radioactive waste). Prior to 1970, transuranic waste was disposed as low-level radioactive waste at other federal sites. However since 1999, transuranic waste is disposed at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad, New Mexico. The transuranic waste currently stored at the Nevada Test Site is anticipated to leave Nevada by 2009.

How are the public, workers and environment protected from past and present Nevada Test Site activities?

Nevada Test Site activities are conducted in a manner which adheres to all environmental protection standards and regulations in order to safeguard the public and environment from any existing or potential contamination. These activities include environmental planning, compliance and monitoring.