



Department of Energy

Carlsbad Field Office
P. O. Box 3090
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221

OCT 17 2014

Mr. John E. Kieling, Bureau Chief
Hazardous Waste Bureau
New Mexico Environment Department
2905 Rodeo Park Drive East, Building 1
Santa Fe, NM 87508-6303

Mr. Tom Blaine, Division Director
Environmental Health Division
Harold Runnels Building
1190 Saint Francis Drive, Room 4050
Santa Fe, NM 87502-5469

Subject: WIPP Nitrate Salt Bearing Waste Container Isolation Plan Implementation Update,
October 16, 2014

Dear Mr. Kieling and Mr. Blaine:

The purpose of this letter is to provide the New Mexico Environment Department the WIPP Nitrate Salt Bearing Waste Container Isolation Plan Implementation Update, October 16, 2014. This update will be posted to the WIPP Information Repository within five working days.

We certify under penalty of law that this document and all attachments were prepared under our direction or supervision in accordance with a system designed to assure that qualified personnel properly gather and evaluate the information submitted. Based on our inquiry of the person or persons who manage the system, or those persons directly responsible for gathering the information, the information submitted is, to the best of our knowledge and belief, true, accurate, and complete. We are aware that there are significant penalties for submitting false information, including the possibility of fine and imprisonment for knowing violations.

Please address any questions you may have regarding the WIPP Nitrate Salt Bearing Waste Container Isolation Plan Implementation Update, October 16, 2014, to Mr. George T. Basabivazo at (575) 234-7488.

Sincerely,

Original Signatures on File

Jose R. Franco, Manager
Carlsbad Field Office

Robert L. McQuinn, Project Manager
Nuclear Waste Partnership LLC

Enclosure

cc: w/enclosure
T. Kliphuis, NMED * ED
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*ED denotes electronic distribution

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Panel 6 Initial Closure

Access to Panel 6

a. Rollback

- Contamination Assessment—Ongoing radiological rollback activities have started near the shaft areas and are progressing towards the south end of the underground via (E-140, W-30 and W-170). Radiological rollback efforts will continue to be focused towards drifts S-2750 and S-3080, which provide access to Panel 6 to support Panel 6 initial closure activities. More than 50 percent of the mine has been characterized and declared a Radiological Buffer Area or a Controlled Area, requiring no radiological personal protective equipment (PPE) for entry. The S-1000 lunchroom and the underground maintenance shops are now accessible, allowing for improved personnel habitability and availability of tools for underground equipment.
- Fixing/Decontamination Activities—Not started.
- Underground Entries—Consistent with the WIPP Recovery Plan, the focus of underground entries is on radiological rollback, geotechnical evaluation, habitability surveys, clean up, electrical and mechanical evaluation of systems, and equipment and repair (if needed) to support bolting and installation of the initial closures in Panel 6. Some equipment maintenance was performed during recent underground entries. Underground entries were delayed early last week due to a malfunction in a local processing unit in the underground that sends ventilation configuration information to the central monitoring room. An uninterrupted power supply (UPS) battery failure was determined to be the cause of the loss of indication. The UPS was replaced and the indication restored. Entries this week are underway.

b. Ground Control Status

- Shaft/Hoist—Salt and Air Intake shafts and hoists are available to support access to the underground. Preventative maintenance and preoperational checks continue in support of placing the Waste Hoist back in service. The Waste Hoist Shaft inspection has been initiated. The inspection is progressing slowly because some scaling has been required as part of the inspection process. An independent inspection of the Waste Hoist head ropes was performed and determined to be successful.
- Bolting—Priorities continue to include resumption of bolting and closure of Panel 6. Efforts are continuing on performing preventative maintenance and cleaning equipment (e.g., forklift and a lube truck) needed to support bolting activities. Maintenance work on the forklift has been completed and the forklift returned to service. This is the first liquid fueled vehicle to be recovered since the February

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events. Preventive maintenance on the lube truck is in progress. This equipment is required for bolting operations.

c. Habitability

- Mine Phones—Initial inspections have been performed for the area between the Air Intake Shaft and Salt Shaft Station. Radiological rollback has allowed access to some mine phones and public address system locations in this limited area. As a result, operability tests have been performed for these underground mine phones and public address system locations. As radiological rollback continues towards Panel 6, mine phones in the Panel 6 area will be checked and, if necessary, will be repaired and have batteries replaced. Self-contained self rescuer caches will be restocked, if needed, in the drifts (e.g., W-30, S-2750) to Panel 6. Habitability activities have started near the shaft areas and are progressing towards the south end of the underground via drifts (E-140, W-30 and W-170) and will continue towards drifts (S-2750 and S-3080) that provide access to Panel 6 to support Panel 6 initial closure activities.
- Other Activities—None to report for this reporting period.

d. Drills, Training, Mockups

- An underground evacuation drill was performed in September. The results met Mine Safety and Health Administration requirements for timely evacuation using the Salt Hoist. An underground evacuation drill was performed on October 15th.

Equipment/Ventilation/Materials

a. Electrical

- Ongoing visual checks are being performed to evaluate the extent of soot accumulation on electrical equipment and clean, if necessary. Electrical equipment operability checks have started near the shaft areas and are progressing towards the south end of the underground via drifts E-140, W-30 and W-170. As radiological rollback progresses, the electrical operability checks will continue to drifts S-2750 and S-3080, which provide access to Panel 6 to support Panel 6 initial closure activities. Some of the electrical evaluations will support installation of radiological monitoring equipment.

b. Ventilation

- Air Flow—The underground ventilation system is currently operating in filtration mode using one 860 fan that supplies a nominal flow rate of 60,000 standard cubic feet per minute to the underground.

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- Roof Bolting—The number of pieces of diesel equipment that can be operated for roof bolting will be limited by the available ventilation in the work area and the minimum ventilation flow rate assigned to each piece of equipment based on Mine Safety and Health Administration air quality requirements. The use of particulate filters on the exhausts of diesel equipment is being considered and will be tested prior to implementation. Roof bolting will be initiated in the E-140 drift and then will progress (south) towards the entrance areas of Panel 6.

c. Stage Needed Materials in Underground

- Bulkheads for the initial closure of Panel 6 are fabricated and are located in the underground.

Document Preparation

a. Work Planning

- Work planning documents are being re-evaluated for new or changed hazards. The mitigations to these hazards and applicable compensatory measures will be included in revisions to the work planning documents for Panel 6 initial closure activities.

b. Safety Basis Documents

- Safety basis documents that support safety basis authorizations for Panel 6 initial closure activities are undergoing review.

Summary - Information Requests/Status

None to date.