



U.S. Department of Energy
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 @WIPPNews

WIPP UPDATE: May 1, 2014

Re-entry personnel confirm damage to magnesium oxide bags

Video and photographs taken during yesterday's entry confirmed that several magnesium oxide bags in Room 7 of Panel 7 were damaged. Each magnesium oxide bag weighs between 3,000-4,200 pounds. They are placed on top of waste containers during disposal operations to prevent the radioactive material from releasing into the environment over a 10,000-year period, ensuring long-term safety of the repository.

The cause of the damage to the bags is still unknown. Eyewitness accounts from employees and video documentation from Wednesday's entry also confirmed there are no issues with the roof or walls in the disposal room.

New air sampling results show no detectable contamination

New air sampling results from the cities of Hobbs, Eunice, Loving and Artesia show no detectable radiological contamination. A total of 89 air samples have been collected from 15 locations since the February 14 event. All air sampling results after February 18 show no contamination. For complete environmental monitoring results, please go the WIPP website at www.wipp.energy.gov.

Progress continues on Waste Handling Hoist cleanup

Progress continues on the cleanup of the Waste Hoist tower and hoist control area, which was coated in a layer of soot during the February 5 underground salt haul truck fire. Teams finished cleaning the fifth floor of the tower and are now concentrating their efforts on the third and fourth floors. The crew is using vacuums equipped with high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters to clear soot before washing the area.

The 45-ton capacity hoist, normally used to transport waste to the underground facility, is extremely important to the WIPP recovery effort. When returned to service, the elevator will carry recovery personnel and equipment to the underground facility.

Community Meetings Scheduled

The City of Carlsbad and DOE will co-host a meeting today featuring updates on WIPP recovery activities. The meeting is scheduled each Thursday 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/>.