

Public Information Meetings

On Modifications to the Hazardous Waste Facility Permit for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant



October 9, 2001

6 to 8 p.m.

WIPP Information Center
Skeen-Whitlock Building
4021 National Parks Highway
Carlsbad, New Mexico

October 11, 2001

3 to 5 p.m.

6 to 8 p.m.

Courtyard by Marriott
3347 Cerrillos Road
Santa Fe, New Mexico

The U.S. Department of Energy Carlsbad Field Office is hosting public meetings to:

- Provide supplemental information to the public concerning modifications to the Hazardous Waste Facility Permit for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP)
- Explain the process for submitting comments
- Provide a forum for an exchange of views among the public, the facility's owner (U.S. Department of Energy), the management and operating contractor (Westinghouse TRU Solutions LLC), and the regulatory agency (New Mexico Environment Department)

DOE submitted and implemented three Class 1 permit modifications in July and November 2000. In response to questions from the New Mexico Environment Department, the permittees concluded that these modifications would benefit from review under the Class 2 process. This will allow for additional regulatory review and expanded public participation. The three requested modifications are (1) the ability to composite up to 20 headspace gas samples, (2) adding two additional methods for obtaining headspace gas samples, and (3) establishing safety conditions that will be applied to drums selected for visual examination.

To obtain information about the Class 2 Permit Modification, contact Bobby St. John at the WIPP Information Center, 1-800-336-9477. The permit modifications are also available on the WIPP Web site, <http://www.wipp.carlsbad.nm.us>, and at the WIPP Information Center, Skeen-Whitlock Building, 4021 National Parks Highway, Carlsbad, New Mexico.

Send written comments to:

Mr. Steve Zappe
New Mexico Environment Department
2905 Rodeo Park Drive, Building 1
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505
Phone: 505-428-2517
E-mail steve_zappe@nmenv.state.nm.us
Display ad posted on: September 4, 2001
Comment period begins: September 4, 2001
Comment period ends: November 2, 2001

The permittee's compliance history during the life of the permit being modified is available from the Agency contact person (Mr. Steve Zappe).

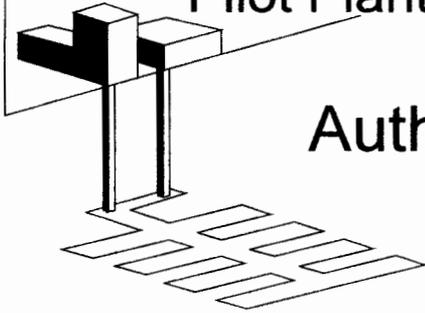
Comments to the permittees relative to this permit modification should be submitted to Mr. Bobby St. John, P.O. Box 2078, Carlsbad, NM 88221 by October 26, 2001.

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Waste Isolation

Pilot Plant



DOE Requests Temporary Authorization for Permit Modifications

Between July and December 2000, the Department of Energy (DOE) submitted and implemented three Class 1 permit modifications to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED). In response to recent questions from NMED, DOE has elected to follow the procedures for the Class 2 modification process. The three modifications in question were presented to NMED on August 28, 2001, under the Class 2 process. DOE has requested Temporary Authorization for these modifications. The modifications allow the generator/storage sites the option to composite headspace samples, authorize two additional methods for obtaining headspace gas samples, and establish safety conditions that will be applied to drums selected for visual examination.

The hazardous waste regulations allow NMED to authorize the implementation of modifications if the applicant can demonstrate, among other things, that the activity is needed to avoid disruption of waste management activities or that the activity is needed to protect human health and the environment.

The DOE's Temporary Authorization Request was submitted on August 28, 2001, and demonstrates that the health and safety benefits from the revised sampling methods and the establishment of criteria for selecting containers for visual examination result in reduced risk of exposure to radiation. In addition, DOE demonstrates in the request that the compositing methodology allows generator sites to maintain reasonable throughput rates, which support efficient operations at the WIPP facility.

The Temporary Authorization request also contains documentation demonstrating that granting the request will not compromise WIPP's ability to protect human health or the environment and that the facility can remain in compliance with the permit and the regulations.

There will be public meetings regarding these modifications in Carlsbad on October 9 and in Santa Fe on October 11, 2001.

For more information contact the WIPP Information Center at 1-800-336-WIPP (9477). You also may visit the WIPP Home Page at <http://www.wipp.carlsbad.nm.us>.

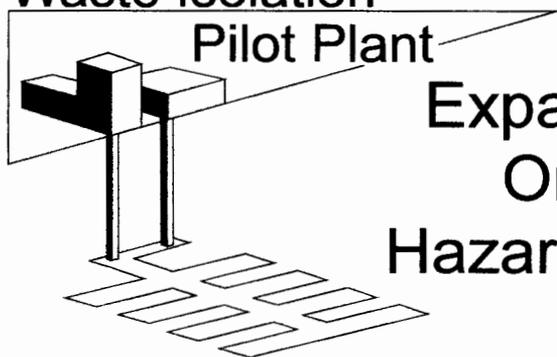
If you prefer, write to:

WIPP Information Center
U.S. Department of Energy
Carlsbad Field Office
P.O. Box 3090
Carlsbad, NM 88221



Waste Isolation
Pilot Plant

Fact Sheet



Expanded Public Participation On Modification to WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility Permit

Headspace Gas Compositing

Background

In July 2000 the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) submitted and implemented a Class 1 modification to its Hazardous Waste Facility Permit for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in support of the DOE cleanup effort. The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) issued the original permit in October 1999.

In response to recent questions from NMED, DOE has elected to follow the procedures for the Class 2 modification process. This action will provide NMED and the public with additional information concerning the modification and with another opportunity to review and comment on it.

What is Proposed?

In the modification, DOE clarifies the use of composited headspace gas data. The approved analytical method (SW-846, method 8260) allows for compositing of samples for analysis. Compositing is the process of physically combining multiple samples into one sample that is analyzed for volatile organic compounds.

Tests have been performed using both composited and non-composited headspace gas samples from Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site and the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory. These studies and their results have been provided to NMED. The analyses show conclusively that using

composited samples does not reduce the accuracy and precision of the required tests on waste to be shipped to WIPP.

What are the Benefits?

The proposed modification would allow facilities to maintain the same stringent testing standards, while at the same time speed up the cleanup of sites currently storing transuranic waste. This change will not adversely affect worker safety, public health, or the environment.

Comments

Comments must be sent to Mr. Steve Zappe, New Mexico Environment Department, 2905 Rodeo Park Drive, Building 1, Santa Fe, NM 87505. They may also be e-mailed: **steve_zappe@nmenv.state.nm.us** or faxed to 505-428-2567. Only written comments will be accepted and must be received by November 2, 2001. A copy of the permit modification may be viewed or copied at the NMED offices of Mr. Steve Zappe.

For more Information

For more information about transuranic waste shipments and procedures, or to be placed on the WIPP mailing list, call the WIPP Information Center at 1-800-336-WIPP (9477). You also may visit the WIPP Home Page at <http://www.wipp.carlsbad.nm.us>. Comments to the Permittees relative to this permit modification should be submitted to Mr. Bobby St. John, P.O. Box 2078, Carlsbad, NM 88221 by October 26, 2001.

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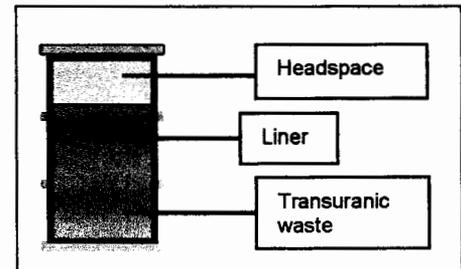
Requirements for Sampling Through Existing Filter Vent Hole

Background

In November 2000 the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) submitted and implemented a Class 1 modification to its Hazardous Waste Facility Permit for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in support of the DOE cleanup effort. The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) issued the original permit in October 1999.

This modification regards methods for sampling headspace gas in waste drums. In response to recent questions from NMED, DOE has elected to follow the procedures for the Class 2 permit modification process. This action will provide NMED and the public with additional information concerning the modification and with another opportunity to review and comment on it.

The permit currently requires DOE to perform tests on samples of headspace gas taken from each waste container to be disposed of at WIPP, to gain information on volatile organic compounds, and verify the assignment of hazardous waste codes.



What is Proposed?

The modification changes the methods used to obtain the headspace sample for certain types of containers. It allows sites to (1) use a self-tapping screw to gain access to the drum headspace instead of using a punch, and (2) to replace the drum filter

with an airtight seal for sampling the headspace in drums and pipe overpack components.

A pipe overpack component has been approved by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission as a container that holds transuranic waste and is designed to be placed into another container such as a 55-gallon drum.

A recent study conducted at Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site, has shown that an airtight seal is an effective mechanism by which headspace gas samples may be collected from both 55-gallon drums, as well as pipe overpack components, without affecting the validity of the sample. This study has been submitted to NMED.

What are the Benefits?

Use of the self-tapping screw allows sites without access to specific drum puncturing equipment to use an alternative, equivalent method to access the container headspace. These new methods of collecting headspace gas samples will allow facilities to better protect workers by reducing the exposure time necessary to obtain the headspace gas sample. As a safety feature, the design of the pipe overpack component provides only very limited access between the waste and the filter vent hole. The access is made by four very small holes (3/32 inch) in the plate that separates the filter vent hole from the headspace gas in the pipe overpack. It is extremely difficult and time consuming to locate those holes with the headspace gas sampling apparatus inserted through a carbon composite filter. This activity would unnecessarily expose workers to undue radiation levels because of the time required to locate one of these small 3/32 inch holes.

It will also reduce the generation of additional new waste caused by the destruction of filters. This modification will not adversely affect worker safety, public health, or the environment.

Comments

Comments must be sent to Mr. Steve Zappe, New Mexico Environment Department, 2905 Rodeo Park Drive, Building 1, Santa Fe, NM 87505. They may also be e-mailed: **steve_zappe@nmenv.state.nm.us** or faxed to 505-428-2567. Only written comments will be accepted and must be received by November 2, 2001. A copy of the permit modification may be viewed or copied at the NMED offices of Mr. Steve Zappe.

For more Information

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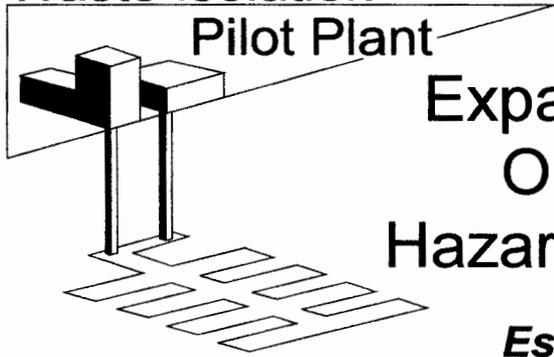
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Expanded Public Participation On Modification to WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility Permit

Establishing Safety Conditions for Visual Examination

Background

In November 2000 the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) submitted and implemented a Class 1 modification to its Hazardous Waste Facility Permit for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in support of the DOE cleanup effort. The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) issued the original permit in October 1999.

The modification regards procedures for establishing safety conditions for visual examination. In response to recent questions from NMED, DOE has elected to follow the procedures for the Class 2 modification process. This action will provide NMED and the public with additional information concerning the modification and with another opportunity to review and comment on the modification.

What is Proposed?

The permit currently requires DOE to randomly select and visually examine a percentage of containers in each Summary Category Group.

This modification allows sites where transuranic waste is currently being stored awaiting shipment to WIPP the ability to establish criteria for the protection of workers involved in visual examination activities. All safety criteria must be based on the characteristics of the waste being examined. For example, containers may be rejected due to high radionuclide content, broken glass, or sharp objects. If a waste container is randomly selected for visual examination and it does not meet the safety criteria, another container must be randomly selected

from the same summary category group. This modification **does not** reduce the number of containers that must be visually examined, it just gives facilities the ability to protect workers by selecting containers that meet the safety criteria.

What are the Benefits?

This permit modification allows facilities to better protect the worker, while at the same time protecting public health and the environment. The new criteria must be part of the sites' written documentation and must be approved by the DOE Carlsbad Field Office. All containers must meet all safety criteria prior to being opened for visual examination. The change will not adversely affect worker safety, public health, or the environment.

Comments

Comments must be sent to Mr. Steve Zappe, New Mexico Environment Department, 2905 Rodeo Park Drive, Building 1, Santa Fe, NM 87505. They may also be e-mailed: **steve_zappe@nmenv.state.nm.us** or faxed to 505-428-2567. Only written comments will be accepted and must be received by November 2, 2001. A copy of the permit modification may be viewed or copied at the NMED offices of Mr. Steve Zappe.

For more Information

For more information about transuranic waste shipments and procedures, or to be placed on the WIPP mailing list, call the WIPP Information Center at 1-800-336-WIPP (9477). You also may visit the WIPP Home Page at <http://www.wipp.carlsbad.nm.us>. Comments to the Permittees relative to this permit modification should be submitted to Mr. Bobby St. John, P.O. Box 2078, Carlsbad, NM 88221 by October 26, 2001.

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