

# Public Information Meetings

## Additional Notification



### On Proposed Class 2 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

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The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) 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 (DOE) the management and operating contractor (Westinghouse TRU Solutions LLC) and the regulatory agency (New Mexico Environment Department [NMED])

The following permit modifications have been classified as Class 2 modification requests. DOE has revised these modifications to include permit text that responds to NMED's technical comments and reflects language in NMED's Hazardous Waste Facility Permit for WIPP, dated August 31, 2001. The three requested modifications are (1) using composite headspace gas data and compositing up to 20 samples, (2) establishing safety conditions for visual examination (VE) of waste containers, and (3) taking samples of headspace gas through existing filter vent holes. The comment period remains the same and will close on November 2, 2001.

To obtain information about the Class 2 Permit Modification, contact Mr. 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](mailto: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 permittees' 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 P.O. Box 2078, Carlsbad, NM 88221 by October 26, 2001.

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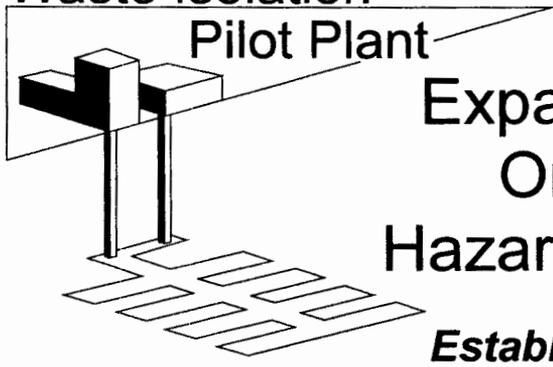
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Fact Sheet

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# Expanded Public Participation On Modification to WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility Permit

## *Establishing Safety Conditions for Visual Examination (VE) of Waste Containers*

### **Additional Notification**

#### **Background**

This modification regards procedures for establishing safety conditions for visual examination. In response to recent questions from the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), the U. S. Department of Energy (DOE) has classified this request as a Class 2 modification. The revised modifications include permit text that responds to NMED's technical comments and reflects language in NMED's Hazardous Waste Facility Permit for WIPP, dated August 31, 2001. NMED issued the original permit in October 1999.

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

#### **What is Proposed?**

This modification establishes criteria that facilities performing visual examination can use for the protection of workers involved in visual examination activities. The safety criteria are 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 gives facilities the ability to protect workers by allowing the rejection of containers that pose undue risk.

**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. The change will improve worker safety, and will not adversely affect 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.

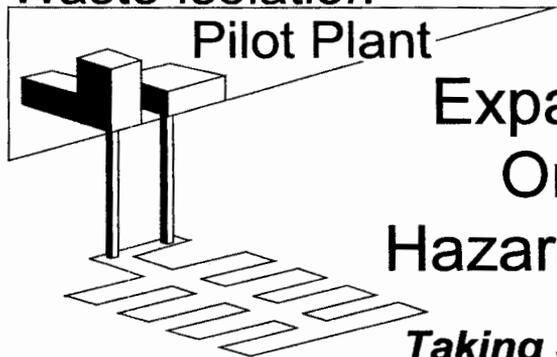
If you prefer, write to:

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





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# Expanded Public Participation On Modification to WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility Permit

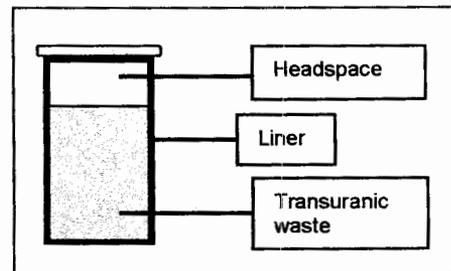
## *Taking Samples of Headspace Gas Through Existing Filter Vent Holes*

### **Additional Notification**

#### ***Background***

This modification regards methods for sampling headspace gas in waste containers. In response to recent questions from the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has classified this request as a Class 2 modification. The revised modifications include permit text that responds to NMED's technical comments and reflects language in NMED's Hazardous Waste Facility Permit for WIPP, dated August 31, 2001. NMED issued the original permit in October 1999.

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 containers.

The pipe overpack container 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 pipe overpack containers 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 container 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 filter. This activity would unnecessarily expose workers to 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](mailto: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.

If you prefer, write to:

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U.S. Department of Energy  
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# Expanded Public Participation On Modification to WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility Permit

*Using Composite Headspace Gas Data and  
Compositing up to 20 Samples*

## Additional Notification

### **Background**

In response to recent questions from the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has classified this request as a Class 2 modification. The revised modifications include permit text that responds to NMED's technical comments and reflects language in NMED's Hazardous Waste Facility Permit for WIPP, dated August 31, 2001. NMED issued the original permit in October 1999.

### **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.

Requirements to assure the accurate reporting of tentatively identified compounds for composited samples are proposed in this modification.

***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.

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