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Department of Energy
Carlsbad Field Office
P. O. Box 3090
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MAY 30 2013



Mr. John E. Kieling, Chief
Hazardous Waste Bureau
New Mexico Environment Department
2905 Rodeo Park Drive East, Bldg. 1
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505-6303

Subject: Recent Changes to the WIPP HWFP and the Performance of Recertification Audits

Dear Mr. Kieling:

The following is a summary of a conference call held on April 17, 2013 with members of your staff and personnel from the Department of Energy (DOE) Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO), the Nuclear Waste Partnership, LLC, Central Characterization Program (NWP/CCP), the Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project (AMWTP), and the CBFO Technical Assistance Contractor (CTAC). Additional clarifications received during a call on May 15, 2013 have also been incorporated. Both calls were to discuss the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) expectations regarding the recent modifications to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Hazardous Waste Facility Permit (HWFP), the implementation of those modifications by the waste generator sites (i.e., CCP and AMWTP), and the performance of subsequent recertification audits (by CBFO and CTAC).

As a result of these communications, the following clarifications were reached to ensure continued compliance with recent changes to the WIPP HWFP in the areas of headspace gas, and solid sampling and analysis:

1. The NMED expressed that they expect the waste generator sites to complete the Batch Data Reports (BDRs) initiated for headspace gas, and solid sampling and analysis activities prior to April 12, 2013 (March 13, 2013, plus 30 calendar days). Examples of these activities include completion of sample collection activities including associated BDRs through project level validation and verification (Project Level Validation and Verification [PL V&V]) and completion of sample analysis activities including completed BDRs through PL V&V for analyses that commenced prior to April 12, 2013. With regard to the completion of sampling and analysis lots, the CBFO understands that only those containers that have been selected for sampling and analysis will be completed if sampling and analysis activities were initiated prior to April 12, 2013.
2. The CBFO and NMED expect that waste characterization activities and generated data are evaluated for compliance with the requirements in effect at the time. Through April 12, 2013, the previous C6 checklists (those from the HWFP dated May 8, 2012) will be used for headspace gas, and solid sampling and analysis. The C6 checklists from the HWFP (dated March 13, 2013) will be used for the other areas to be reviewed (i.e., real time radiography, visual examination, etc.). The use of the March 13, 2013 checklists in this manner is justified because of the relatively insignificant changes in various sections of the new C6 checklists. In addition, this approach has been used for previous permit modifications that had minimal changes to the C6 checklist.



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3. To reduce the amount of paper generated and maintain consistency in the documentation of generator site activities, the C6 checklist documentation for generator sites where characterization and certification activities have been suspended will be minimized. The CBFO will limit the submittal to only the respective cover sheet for each area of review. The cover sheet will include an annotation that no characterization or certification activity has been performed at this generator site since the last certification or recertification audit. There will be no objective evidence package provided, and no current copy of procedures.

The CBFO believes these expectations expressed by the NMED are consistent with the revised HWFP and will promote a unified understanding of the requirements for future recertification audits.

Please contact Mr. Dennis S. Miehl, Acting Director for the CBFO Office of Quality Assurance, at (575) 234-7491, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Jose R. Franco, Manager
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