

**Allen, Pam, NMENV**

---

**From:** Maestas, Ricardo, NMENV  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 13, 2014 10:03 AM  
**To:** Allen, Pam, NMENV  
**Subject:** FW: Public Disclosure that Dampers leaked....

April

---

**From:** Kliphuis, Trais, NMENV  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 16, 2014 10:37 AM  
**To:** Maestas, Ricardo, NMENV; Smith, Coleman, NMENV; Holmes, Steve, NMENV  
**Cc:** Kieling, John, NMENV  
**Subject:** Public Disclosure that Dampers leaked....

From: [http://www.wipp.energy.gov/wipprecovery/accident\\_desc.html](http://www.wipp.energy.gov/wipprecovery/accident_desc.html)

When the CAM alarmed, two dampers were automatically closed in the exhaust duct that redirected the exhaust through high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters that removes radioactive particles.

The next day an aboveground exhaust air monitor on the WIPP site detected very low levels of airborne radioactive contamination. The 140 employees at the site were kept indoors as a precaution while air samples were taken. The 13 employees present during the radioactive release event on February 14 were tested for internal radioactive contamination after the event. The 140 employees have also been offered testing.

It is believed that a small amount of radioactivity leaked by the exhaust-duct dampers, through the unfiltered exhaust ducts and escaped aboveground. The exhaust duct dampers are large "butterfly" valves that are designed to close and cut off the air flow through the exhausters. However, the valves do not fully seal the exhaust ducts and still allowed a small amount of unfiltered air to escape.

The dampers have since been sealed with high-density expanding foam insulation. Remote monitors lowered down the Air Intake Shaft and Salt Shaft into the underground repository have not detected airborne radioactivity. Plans and preparations are being made for a manned entry into the underground repository.

From: [http://www.wipp.energy.gov/wipprecovery/accident\\_desc.html](http://www.wipp.energy.gov/wipprecovery/accident_desc.html)

Trais Kliphuis  
WIPP Staff Manager  
Hazardous Waste Bureau  
New Mexico Environment Department  
2905 Rodeo Park Drive E, Building 1  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Office: 505-476-6051  
Front Desk: 505-476-6000

Follow @WIPPNEWS | Last Updated: 7/16/14

WIPP Home Page | Contact Us | Search

**RECOVERY PAGE**

Home

**EVENT INFORMATION**

**Accident Description**

- Protective Actions
- Sampling Results
- Path Forward
- Frequently Asked Questions

**NEWS AND UPDATES**

- Past WIPP Updates
- News Releases
- Fact Sheets
- Photo and Video

**OTHER WIPP DOCUMENTS AND TOOLS**

**Hazardous Waste Permit**

- Information Repository
- Stakeholder Notification
- Stakeholder Documents
- Submitted Modifications/Requests for Comments
- Information of Proposed Modifications

**WIPP Toolbox**

- WIPP Waste Information System Public Access
- CH Bay VOC Monitoring Report Page

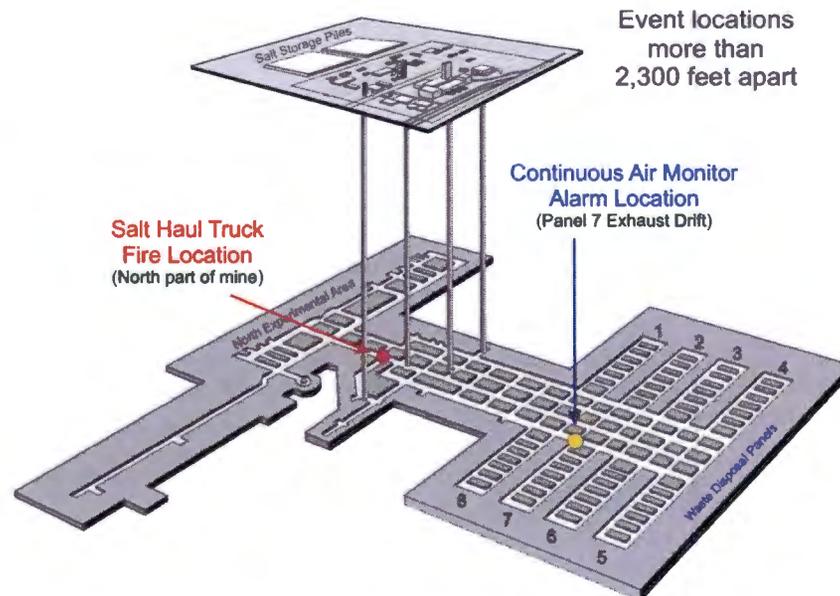
**What happened at WIPP in February 2014**



Salt hauling truck after the fire

Two isolated events took place at WIPP in February. On February 5, a salt haul truck caught fire. Workers were evacuated and the underground portion of WIPP was shut down. Several workers were treated for smoke inhalation, but no injuries occurred.

Nine days later, late in the evening of February 14, a second unrelated event occurred when a continuous air monitor (CAM) alarmed during the night shift, when only 11 employees were at the WIPP site on the surface, no employees were in the underground. Two other WIPP employees reported to the site a couple hours later. The continuous air monitor measured airborne radioactivity close to the operating location where waste was being emplaced. Ventilation air is pulled from the underground repository by huge fans on the surface. This exhaust consists of unfiltered clean air.



When the CAM alarmed, two dampers were automatically closed in the exhaust duct that redirected the exhaust through high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters that removes radioactive particles.

The next day an aboveground exhaust air monitor on the WIPP site detected very low levels of airborne radioactive contamination. The 140 employees at the site were kept indoors as a precaution while air samples were taken. The 13 employees present during the radioactive release event on February 14 were tested for internal radioactive contamination after the event. The 140 employees have also been offered testing.

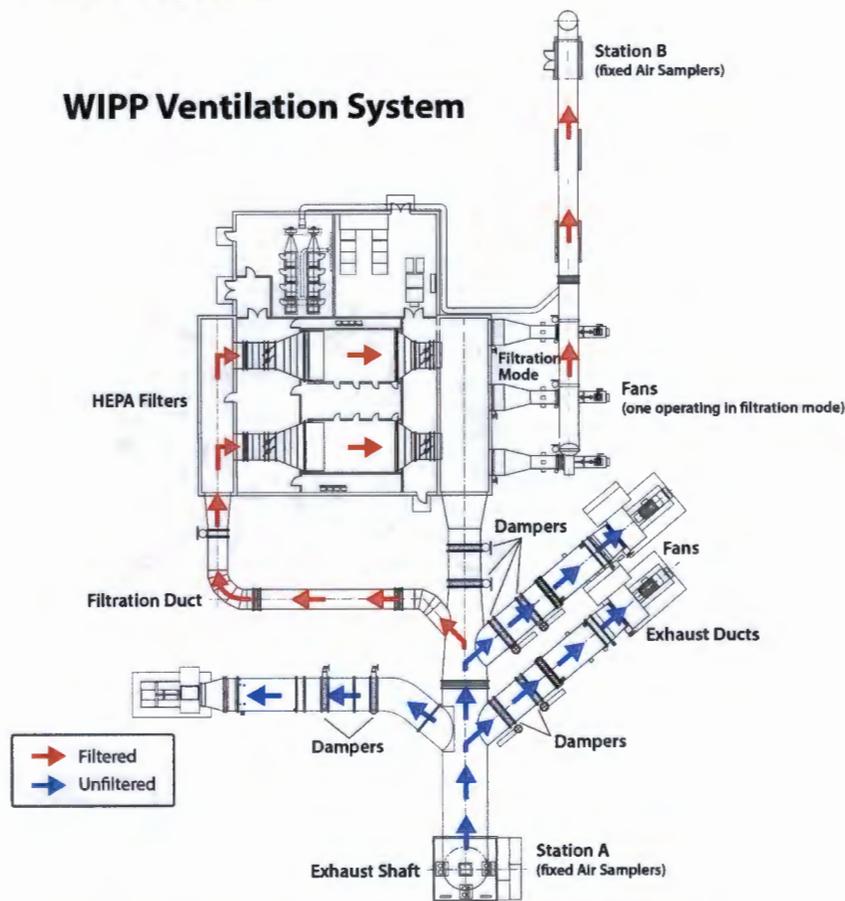
It is believed that a small amount of radioactivity leaked by the exhaust-duct dampers, through the unfiltered exhaust ducts and escaped aboveground. The exhaust duct dampers are large "butterfly" valves that are designed to close and cut off the air flow through the exhausters. However, the valves do not fully seal the exhaust ducts and still allowed a small amount of unfiltered air to escape.

The dampers have since been sealed with high-density expanding foam insulation. Remote monitors lowered down the Air Intake Shaft and Salt Shaft into the underground repository have not detected airborne radioactivity. Plans and preparations are being made for a manned entry into the underground repository.

[Onsite Underground Ventilation Sampling Results](#) 

[Radiological Modeling Results](#) 

## WIPP Ventilation System



### ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION BOARD REPORTS

As a result of the February 5 incident, when a salt haul truck caught fire in the underground portion of Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Environmental Management (EM) established an Accident Investigation Board (AIB) to assess the WIPP safety systems programs and processes at the federal and contractor level. This investigation included analysis of training and qualifications, maintenance and emergency management response to the incident.

The DOE AIB uses a rigorous process to investigate events that had or potentially could have had a negative impact to the employees, public or the environment. The DOE Carlsbad Field Office and its contractor, Nuclear Waste Partnership, made every aspect of WIPP operations available to the investigation team.

The fire was a serious event that posed a threat to workers deep underground. In this case, the fire resulted in minor smoke inhalation to six workers, but it did not impact the public or the environment. There is no indication the fire was related to the February 14 radiological release.

The AIB report details a significant number of Judgments of Needs (JON) that will form the basis for corrective actions designed to prevent the recurrence of such an event.

Also included in the report is a Summary of Positive Observations, which included prompt employee actions that prevented injuries.

DOE Headquarters, the Carlsbad Field Office and Nuclear Waste Partnership are working together to develop and implement corrective actions.

The AIB report on the haul-truck fire was released March 7. To view the report, click on the following link.

- [Accident Investigation Report on February 5 Fire](#) 
- [Accident Investigation Summary Slides](#) 

The DOE AIB also conducted an investigation of the February 14 radiological event at WIPP. Their report is being issued in two phases. Phase I focuses on the release of radioactive material from the underground to the environment and the follow-on response to the release. The Phase I AIB Report was released April 24. To view the report, click on the following link.

- [Accident Investigation Report on February 14 Radiological Event \(Phase 1\)](#) 
- [Accident Investigation Summary Slides](#) 

The Phase 2 report will be focused on determining the direct cause of the release of the material. A release date is yet to be determined.

---

#### Media Contact for Recovery

**Tim Runyon**  
U.S. Department of Energy  
WIPP Recovery Communications  
P.O. Box 3090  
Carlsbad, NM 88221-2078  
Phone: (575) 234-7545  
E-mail: [Tim.Runyon@cbfo.doe.gov](mailto:Tim.Runyon@cbfo.doe.gov)

**Donavan Mager**  
Manager Communications  
Nuclear Waste Partnership LLC  
P.O. Box 2078 GSA-104  
Carlsbad, NM 88221-2078  
Phone: (575) 234-7586  
E-mail: [Donavan.Mager@wipp.ws](mailto:Donavan.Mager@wipp.ws)

**Notice To Users:** Use of this system constitutes consent to security monitoring and testing. All activity is logged with your host name and IP address. For more information, please refer to the [DOE Privacy Policy](#).  
Please report problems to: [webmaster@wipp.ws](mailto:webmaster@wipp.ws)