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Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221  
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NMED  
Hazardous Waste Bureau

Mr. John E. Kieling, Bureau Chief  
Hazardous Waste Bureau  
New Mexico Environment Department  
2905 Rodeo Park Drive East, Building 1  
Santa Fe, NM 87508-6303

Mr. Tom Blaine, Division Director  
Environmental Health Division  
Harold Runnels Building  
1190 Saint Francis Drive, Room 4050  
Santa Fe, NM 87502-5469

Subject: WIPP Nitrate Salt Bearing Waste Container Isolation Plan Implementation Update,  
October 9, 2014

Dear Mr. Kieling and Mr. Blaine:

The purpose of this letter is to provide the New Mexico Environment Department WIPP Nitrate Salt Bearing Waste Container Isolation Plan Implementation Update, October 9, 2014. This update will be posted to the WIPP Information Repository within five working days.

We certify under penalty of law that this document and all attachments were prepared under our direction or supervision in accordance with a system designed to assure that qualified personnel properly gather and evaluate the information submitted. Based on our inquiry of the person or persons who manage the system, or those persons directly responsible for gathering the information, the information submitted is, to the best of our knowledge and belief, true, accurate, and complete. We are aware that there are significant penalties for submitting false information, including the possibility of fine and imprisonment for knowing violations.

Please address any questions you may have regarding the WIPP Nitrate Salt Bearing Waste Container Isolation Plan Implementation Update, Tuesday, October 9, 2014, to Mr. George Basabilvazo at (575) 234-7488.

Sincerely,

  
Jose R. Franco, Manager  
Carlsbad Field Office

  
Robert L. McQuinn, Project Manager  
Nuclear Waste Partnership LLC

Enclosure

cc: w/enclosure  
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\*ED denotes electronic distribution



# **WIPP Nitrate Salt Bearing Waste Container Isolation Plan Implementation Update**

**October 9, 2014**

## **Panel 6 Initial Closure**

### **Access to Panel 6**

#### **a. Rollback**

- Contamination Assessment—Ongoing radiological rollback activities have started near the shaft areas and are progressing towards the south end of the underground via the main drifts (i.e., E-140 and W-30) to the drifts (S-2750 and S-3080) that access Panel 6 to support Panel 6 initial closure activities. More than 50% of the mine has been characterized and declared a Radiological Buffer Area or a Controlled Area, requiring no PPE for entry.
- Fixing/Decontamination Activities—Not started.
- Underground Entries—Consistent with the WIPP Recovery Plan, the focus of underground entries is on radiological rollback, geotechnical evaluation, habitability surveys, clean up, and electrical and mechanical evaluation of systems and equipment and repair (if needed) to support bolting and installation of the initial closures in Panel 6. Some equipment maintenance was performed during recent underground entries. Underground entries were delayed this week due to a malfunction in a local processing unit (LPU) in the underground that sends ventilation configuration information to the central monitoring room.

#### **b. Ground Control Status**

- Shaft/Hoist—Salt and Air Intake shafts and hoists are available to support access to the underground. Preventative maintenance and preoperational checks are ongoing to support placing the Waste Hoist back in service.
- Bolting—Efforts are continuing on performing preventative maintenance and cleaning equipment (e.g., forklift and a lube truck) needed to support bolting activities.

#### **c. Habitability**

Mine Phones— Initial inspections have been performed for the area between the Air Intake Shaft and Salt Shaft Station. The inspections allowed access to some mine phones and public address systems. As a result, tests have been performed for

underground mine phones and public address systems in this limited area. Mine phones in the Panel 6 area will be checked and, if necessary, will be repaired and have batteries replaced. Self-Contained Self Rescuer caches will be restocked, if needed, in the drifts (e.g., W-30, S-2750) to Panel 6. Habitability activities have started near the shaft areas and are progressing towards the south end of the underground via the main drifts (i.e., E-140 and W-30) and will continue towards the drifts (S-2750 and S-3080) that access Panel 6 to support Panel 6 initial closure activities.

- Other Activities - The S-1000 lunchroom has been rolled back to a Controlled Area.

#### **d. Drills, Training, Mockups**

- An underground evacuation drill was performed in September. The results met the MSHA requirements for timely evacuation using the Salt Hoist.

### **Equipment/Ventilation/Materials**

#### **a. Electrical**

- Ongoing checks to evaluate the extent of soot accumulation on electrical equipment and clean, if necessary, and to evaluate electrical equipment operability started near the shaft areas and is progressing towards the south end of the underground via the main drifts (i.e., E-140 and W-30) to the drifts (S-2750 and S-3080) that access Panel 6 to support Panel 6 initial closure activities. Some of the underground electrical infrastructure in the drifts to Panel 6 will be checked and verified as operational to support installation of radiological monitoring equipment.

#### **b. Ventilation**

- Air Flow—The underground ventilation system is currently operating in filtration mode using one 860 fan that supplies a nominal flow rate of 60,000 standard cubic feet per minute (scfm) to the underground.
- Roof Bolting—The number of pieces of diesel equipment that can be operated for roof bolting will be limited based on the available ventilation in the work area and the minimum ventilation flow rate assigned to each piece of equipment based on Mine Safety and Health Administration air quality requirements. Roof bolting will be initiated in the E-140 drift and then will progress (south) towards the entrance areas of Panel 6.

#### **c. Stage Needed Materials in Underground**

- Bulkheads for the initial closure of Panel 6 are fabricated and are located in the underground.

## **Document Preparation**

### **a. Work Planning**

- Work planning documents are being re-evaluated for new and changed hazards. The mitigations to these hazards and applicable compensatory measures will be included in revisions to the work planning documents for Panel 6 initial closure activities.

### **b. Safety Basis Documents**

- Safety basis documents that support safety basis authorizations for Panel 6 initial closure activities are undergoing review.

## **Summary - Information Requests/Status**

None to date.