

U.S. Department of Energy  
 Carlsbad Field Office  
 Waste Isolation Pilot Plant  
 P.O. Box 3090  
 Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221

**Media Contact:**  
 Tim Runyon  
 WIPP Recovery Communications  
 (575) 234-7545

[www.wipp.energy.gov](http://www.wipp.energy.gov)

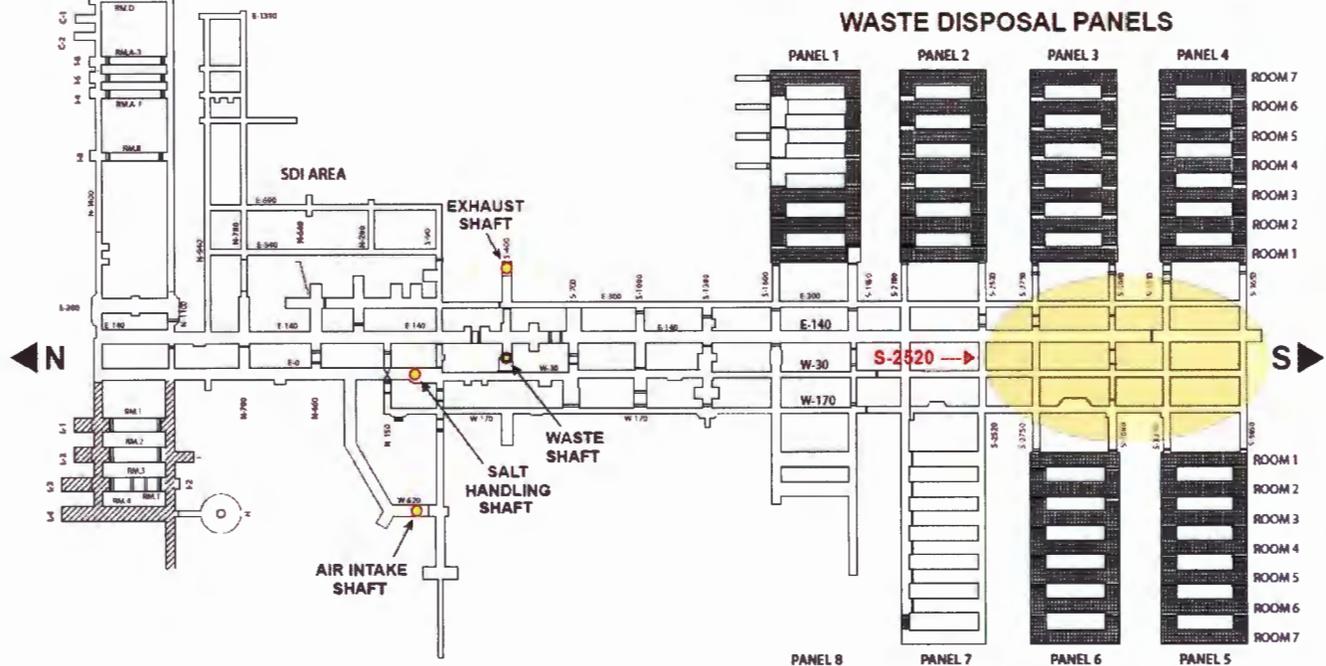
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## WIPP UPDATE: January 29, 2016

### Respiratory Protection Requirements Reduced in Parts of WIPP Underground

As a result of radiological risk mitigation efforts by WIPP Radiological Control teams, this week requirements for respiratory protection were lifted for a significant portion of the WIPP underground. The change in respiratory protection requirements applies to all areas south of S-2520 and represents a significant milestone in the contamination mitigation efforts. While the use of protective clothing, booties and gloves is still necessary in these areas, eliminating the need for powered air purifying respirators (PAPR) will reduce physical stress on employees working there and will make performance of work activities easier and safer.

Airborne radioactivity levels in the south end of the underground were mitigated through the use of a fresh water spray applied the walls and floors of the common access drifts. At this time, Panel 7 and its associated exhaust drift, and the exhaust shaft are now the only areas of the underground where respiratory protection is required to be used.



The yellow highlighted area in the drawing depicts the general area where respiratory protection requirements were lifted this week.



In addition to the water spray, the natural affinity of salt to draw moisture from the air has aided in the encapsulation of contaminants in the surface of the rock. Although low levels of surface contamination exist in these areas, surveys, sampling and air monitoring data have confirmed that remaining contamination is fixed and not available for resuspension to the air, thus eliminating the need for respiratory protection. This posting change is in accordance with 10 CFR 835, Occupational Radiation Protection, and is based on a data set independently verified by senior radiation protection managers.

**Next WIPP Town Hall Meeting Scheduled April 7**

The City of Carlsbad and the Department of Energy's Carlsbad Field Office will co-host its quarterly Town Hall meeting featuring updates on WIPP recovery activities on Thursday, April 7 at 5:30 p.m. Location: Carlsbad City Council Chambers, 101 N. Halagueno Street. Live streaming of the meeting can be seen at <http://new.livestream.com/rrv/>.