Good afternoon,

I just received a call from the WIPP Permittees:
All seems to be fine at the current moment, the investigation is ongoing.

At about 11:10am this morning an underground worker was driving his cart and came up to another electric cart in the area of West-170 and South-2520 (near the entrance to Panel 7) and noticed the smoke coming from the battery. The worker unplugged the battery and the smoke seemed to stop.
Per their internal procedures for visual smoke, and their Contingency Plan, the underground was evacuated and their facility Contingency Plan was implemented. There were no injuries reported.

WIPP folks called my desk and spoke to me as the notification to NMED.

The investigation is ongoing.
WIPP folks hope to stand down soon, and will notify NMED when the Contingency Plan has been exited.

Additionally, the Permittees will be sending NEMD a report of the incident within 15 days as required by the WIPP Permit, Attachment D, Section D-3 Criteria for Implementation of the RCRA Contingency Plan:

“In accordance with 20.4.1.500 NMAC (incorporating 40 CFR §264.56(i)), the RCRA Emergency Coordinator, on behalf of the Permittees, will record the time, date, and details of the incident that required implementation of the RCRA Contingency Plan. The Secretary of the NMED will be immediately notified by the Permittees. Additionally, the Permittees shall submit a written report to the NMED within 15 days of the incident, as specified in Section D-5.”

Please let me know if you have any questions.
Thank you.

Ricardo Maestas
NMED WIPP Staff Manager
Hazardous Waste Bureau
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