



## Radiation Protection


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# News from the Radiation Protection Division

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December

## News for December

### EPA Approves Hanford Waste Characterization

On December 21, 2010, EPA approved the [transuranic](#) (TRU) waste characterization program at the DOE Hanford site in Richland, Washington. Hanford's Central Characterization Project will now be responsible for conducting waste characterization activities at all of the major DOE waste generating facilities. The TRU wastes characterized at Hanford are destined for disposal at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in New Mexico.

Congress charged EPA with approval of DOE's quality assurance programs and characterization controls for TRU wastes destined for disposal at WIPP. EPA is also responsible for audits or site inspections to determine if DOE is properly ensuring that the TRU wastes meet specified component limits. EPA evaluated the characterization of TRU debris waste at Hanford during an inspection conducted April 27-29, 2010, and proposed baseline approval of the program on September 8, 2010. EPA gave final approval of the program after consideration of public comments.

More information is available on our [Inspections](#) page.

### 2010 WIPP Recertification

On November 18, 2010, EPA officially recertified that the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) continues to comply with regulations for disposal of [transuranic](#) (TRU) wastes. Congress requires DOE to apply for recertification every five years starting with the first receipt of TRU waste. EPA first recertified the facility in 2006. Certification documents, supporting technical documents and TRU waste disposal regulations can be found at our [2010 Recertification Page](#).

### Review of Rules Governing Radon from Operating Uranium Mill Tailings

EPA plans to propose a decision on revising the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAPs) Subpart W-Radon from Operating Uranium Mill Tailings by late 2011. After reviewing public comments, EPA expects to issue a final

decision in the late winter of 2012.

For more information, including resource documents, contacts, and minutes from a series of conference calls, visit our [Subpart W](#) page.

<http://www.epa.gov/radiation/news/index.html>  
Last updated on Wednesday, December 22, 2010

### **Review of Health and Environmental Protection Standards for Uranium and Thorium Mill Tailings**

EPA is reviewing its regulations for uranium and thorium milling to determine if revisions are necessary to bring them up-to-date. The regulatory standards at 40 CFR Part 192 are currently in effect, and establish standards for protection of public health, safety, and environment from radiological and nonradiological hazards associated with uranium and thorium ore processing and their associated wastes. The Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act (UMTRCA) requires EPA to review these regulations periodically.

The public has been participating in the review in a series of meetings and in an on-line [Discussion Forum](#). Four topics are currently being discussed in the on-line [Forum](#), which also contains meeting reports, technical studies and a complete history of the regulations.

For more information on standards for uranium and thorium processing, visit our page on [Technologically Enhanced Naturally Occurring Radioactive Metals](#).

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