

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 5, 2017

TO: Steven Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: Anthony Battaglia, WIPP Cognizant Engineer
SUBJECT: Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Report for April 2017

DNFSB Staff Activity: D. Winters was on site performing routine oversight April 3-7. D. Burnfield and D. Minnema were on site April 11-14 performing observations of the Radiological Control Program. R. Quirk was on site April 17-21 performing routine oversight and to complete training. Staff oversight during FY-2017 has averaged 3.8 person-weeks/month.

Waste Shipments and Emplacement: Both waste emplacement and waste shipments have resumed during the month of April. On April 10, the contractor detected elevated levels of vapors from volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the workplace during the removal of the inner package from a TRUPACT-II. The detection was not unexpected and the contractor paused operations to assess the situation. Additional procedures have been put in place to ensure safe removal of the packages from the transport cask.

Eleven pallets of waste from 2014 that remain in the Contact-Handled Waste Bay of the Waste Handling Building (WHB) are creating logistical issues. These pallets must remain in the WHB until the evaluation of oxidizers in the waste stream is completed. Waste disposal operations are currently restricted and some TRUPACT-II containers with transuranic waste received each week may have to be temporarily stored outside the WHB.

The first shipments of waste from Waste Control Specialists arrived at WIPP last week. The waste shipped did not include any remediated nitrate salt (RNS) waste. The Board's staff is continuing to monitor the progress of shipments and emplacement activities.

Ground Control. The ground control program is not currently credited as a specific administrative control in the Documented Safety Analysis (DSA). The DSA acknowledges that ground control cannot be maintained once waste is emplaced in the disposal rooms, however, there is no documentation in the safety documents that states what ground control requirements need to be maintained prior to emplacing waste. The Board's staff is continuing to follow this issue.

The contractor has continued to bolt and perform routine ground control activities in the contaminated areas and the disposal transport path. The contractor has met its bolting goal of 110 bolts/week three times during the month of April.