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Team Re-Enters Building Where Drum Breach Occurred at DOE Idaho Site

IDAHO FALLS, ID – A three-person team re-entered the Accelerated Retrieval Project V (ARP V) facility of the Department of Energy's Radioactive Waste Management Complex (RWMC) on April 19 to collect data from the scene of an April 11 drum breach. There were no injuries or external release of radioactive material during the incident or during the re-entry.

Crew members wore sealed radiological suits with supplied air as they entered the ARP V facility during the late afternoon. Once inside, they took smear samples for radiological analysis, reset constant air monitors within the area and inspected the affected waste drum and nearby drums. In addition to the 55-gallon drum that experienced the pressure excursion, the crew also noted that three other drums had their lids ejected due to excessive pressure.

Plans are underway to make additional entries into the ARP V building to gather samples of material from the affected waste drums and recover other bulk samples for further analysis. That material will undergo laboratory analysis to determine its radiological and chemical properties. Such data will allow a Causal Analysis Team to determine the likely cause of the April 11 event and prevent a reoccurrence.

The waste from the incident likely was sent to Idaho in the late 1960s from the Rocky Flats Plant near Denver, Colo. Since 2012, the ARP V facility has processed and repackaged approximately 9,500 drums of sludge-contaminated waste to characterize it, and remove liquids and prohibited items from the waste in preparation for certification and shipment to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico for permanent disposal.

The waste drums from the April 11 incident had been processed earlier that day, and were repackaged and staged for several hours before the event occurred. None of the drums had completed the final characterization, treatment and certification process required for shipment to WIPP.

DOE and its cleanup contractor Fluor Idaho had temporarily suspended shipments to WIPP following the incident, but have since resumed a regular shipping schedule after confirming that none of the waste certified for shipment to WIPP was related to the waste stream involved in the incident. The ARP V facility where the event occurred was designed to contain any contamination inside the building. It has a negative air flow, pulling air from the outside and channeling all exhaust through the facility's high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters that trap contaminants.

Fluor Idaho, LLC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Fluor Corporation with partners comprised of CH2M, North Wind Inc., Portage, and Waste Control Specialists. Fluor Idaho manages the Idaho Cleanup Project Core contract at the Department of Energy's Idaho Site located 45 miles west of Idaho Falls. The 5-year, \$1.4 billion project, funded through the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management, focuses on early risk reduction and protection of the Snake River Plain Aquifer.

For more information visit the Idaho Cleanup Project on the Web at <https://fluor-idaho.com>