

Mixed Low-Level Waste

. . .at the Nevada Test Site

Background

The historic role the Nevada Test Site played during development and testing of nuclear weapons helped to protect the safety and security of the United States. Today, the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Environmental Management Program is aggressively cleaning up remnants of these historic activities at the Nevada Test Site and other sites across the United States. One such remnant is mixed low-level waste which is generated by a broad spectrum of processes and activities, such as equipment maintenance, materials production, environmental restoration, and facility deactivation and decommissioning.

Mixed Low-Level Waste Composition

Mixed low-level waste is a "mix" of low-level radioactive materials and hazardous constituents. The low-level portion of mixed waste contains small amounts of radioactive material and can generally be handled without personal protective equipment. Mixed low-level waste is handled separately from low-level waste because of its hazardous component.

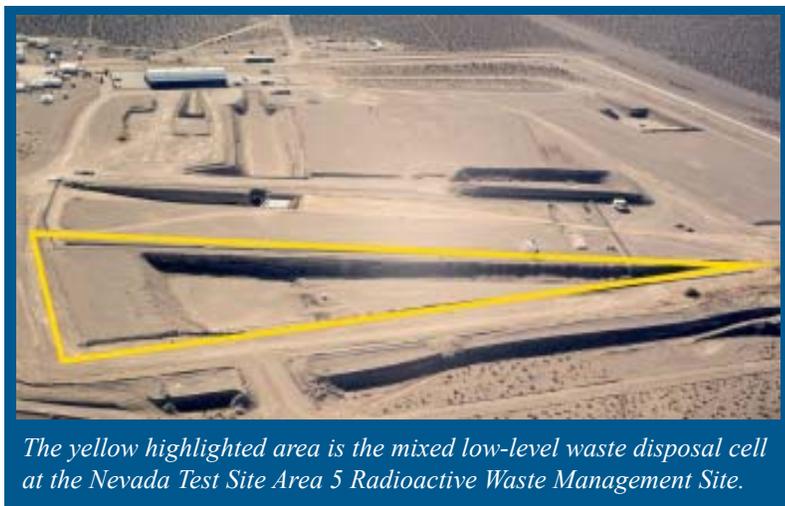
Hazardous wastes are materials that are toxic, corrosive, reactive, ignitable, or are specifically identified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as "hazardous." The EPA regulates generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste (often referred to as "cradle-to-grave" management) as set forth in the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). In Nevada, the EPA delegated authority to the State to ensure compliance with RCRA.

Disposal at the Nevada Test Site

The Nevada Test Site operates a mixed low-level waste disposal cell under interim status with the State imposed provision that disposal be limited to DOE Nevada Site Office mixed low-level waste generated in the state of Nevada. However, because the Nevada Test Site is designated by DOE as one of two regional disposal facilities for mixed low-level waste, a RCRA Part B Permit Application has been submitted to the state of Nevada to allow for the disposal of mixed low-level waste from approved DOE sites across the United States.

Storage of Mixed Low-Level Waste

In addition to its disposal capabilities, the Nevada Test Site operates a mixed low-level waste storage facility. This facility manages legacy and newly identified mixed low-level waste prior to off-site treatment and/or disposal. The waste handled at this facility must be dealt with in accordance with strict treatment/disposal schedules established by the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection.



The yellow highlighted area is the mixed low-level waste disposal cell at the Nevada Test Site Area 5 Radioactive Waste Management Site.

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Summary

Mixed low-level waste will continue to be managed at the Nevada Test Site in support of environmental management and other activities. In addition, the DOE Nevada Site Office will continue to work diligently towards meeting its objective to provide a crucial mixed waste disposal facility for other DOE sites throughout the United States engaged in accelerated cleanup.

For more information, please contact:

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