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New Technology Improves Efficiency of Waste Characterization at Idaho Facility

IDAHO FALLS, Idaho – Workers at the Idaho National Laboratory Site are employing an innovative technology to characterize more than 320 drums, boxes and objects that have been difficult to measure with other equipment used at the [Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project](#).

The new in-situ object counting system allows crews with [cleanup contractor Fluor Idaho](#) to characterize the containers of radioactive waste and ship their contents to the [Waste Isolation Pilot Plant](#) in New Mexico for permanent disposal. The containers come from multiple locations, including INL and the former [Rocky Flats](#) and [Mound](#) sites.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency approved the ISOCS as compliant with WIPP waste acceptance criteria following a recent evaluation at the AMWTP.

Workers have used non-destructive assay equipment to determine specific radioactive isotopes and quantities in waste containers. However, they couldn't obtain valid results due to the shape or configuration of waste in several hundred containers. As a result, that waste required more extensive evaluation.

Fluor Idaho teamed with Mirion Technologies to deploy the ISOCS. To use the system, personnel measure the dimensions of waste containers and enter that information into a computer program. They also use data from a camera that maps gamma rays emanating from the containers and locates portions with high levels of radiation. The system then characterizes the gamma rays and determines specific isotopes and radioactive quantities. The technology also double-checks waste characterization assessments for consistency.

"Putting the system into use allows us to provide the specific characterization data required by WIPP," Fluor Idaho Manager Ed Gulbransen said.

Gulbransen said AMWTP was fortunate that EPA and EM's Carlsbad Field Office, which is responsible for WIPP, allow for new technologies for waste characterization.

"We just had to demonstrate the ISOCS system for them to give them a level of confidence that we could provide accurate data each and every time the system was used on the waste containers," he said.

Fluor Idaho is scheduled to complete waste treatment at AMWTP later this year. Waste shipments to WIPP and other offsite disposal facilities are expected to continue for another 10 years.

Fluor Idaho, LLC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Fluor Corporation with subcontractor partners 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 National Laboratory 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 safely remediating the Idaho National Laboratory site including dispositioning transuranic waste, managing spent nuclear fuel, and treating high-level radioactive waste.

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

Suggested Photo Caption

Workers with Idaho National Laboratory Site cleanup contractor Fluor Idaho test new technology for characterizing waste containers for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.