



Protecting the public and the environment is our top priority.

Protecting the environment while continuing national security missions

The hazardous waste permit for Los Alamos National Laboratory protects people and the environment while continuing the Lab's national security missions. Without the permit, many important missions would cease.

Background

Under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), LANL is required to obtain a permit from the New Mexico Environment Department for management of hazardous waste. The permit allows for storage or treatment of waste at 24 LANL sites or "units" and incorporates more protective procedures for the units.

Impacts on national security and counter-terrorism missions

LANL possesses unique and world-class expertise in explosive materials and applies it to understanding and defeating explosive threats.

The Environment Department has denied a portion of the permit that enables the Lab to perform important counter-terrorism and national security missions, including:

- improvised explosive device (IED) countermeasures
- explosives detection
- methods to defeat buried mines or other explosives

LANL safely treats explosive debris or residue from this research by burning it at two secure, remote Lab locations.

- Burning is safer than transporting the now-unstable material on public roads for treatment elsewhere.
- Without a proper disposal path, the research cannot continue.
- None of this waste comes from manufacture of nuclear weapons.
- Years of publicly-available data show that the burning poses no human health risk and emits no harmful plume and is rarely even visible.



LANL's research on explosives helps design methods to safeguard troops

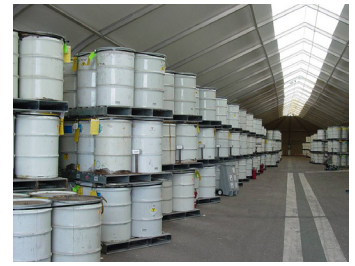
Los Alamos National Laboratory is operated for the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration by Los Alamos National Security, LLC, a team of Bechtel National, the University of California, BWX Technologies, and Washington Group International.



Flash Pad



Flash Pad in use



Waste Storage Units

Why get involved now?

- Participation from the public, employees, retirees, businesses owners, and community leaders is important to the process.
- The permit is in a final draft form.
- Hearings on the permit begin Monday, April 5, 2010, and are expected to last about 2 weeks.
- Environmental permitting in New Mexico is tied strongly to public opinion. The hearing officer will heavily weigh comments at the hearing in recommendations to the Secretary.
- A number of groups who oppose the LANL mission have submitted more than 1,400 written comments.
- A denial of open burning would harm national security, with no appreciable benefit to people or the environment.

Other aspects of the permit are beneficial

The permit

- Combines diverse regulatory schemes for waste management into one comprehensive and consistent document.
- Contains up-to-date procedures.
- Requires enhanced availability and notifications to the public regarding RCRA documentation.
- Integrates the approach to closure of waste storage and cleanup activities at Technical Area 54.

To get involved

Submit written or verbal comments to:

Mr. John E. Kieling, Program Manager
New Mexico Environment Department
Hazardous Waste Bureau
2905 Rodeo Park Drive East, Building 1
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Email: john.kieling@state.nm.us

Phone: (505) 476-6000 Fax: (505) 476-6030

Hearing times and locations will be announced.

For more information:

- www.lanl.gov/environment/waste/rcra.shtml
- www.nmenv.state.nm.us/hwb/lanlperm.html

LANL's hazardous waste permit allows the Lab to safely manage and treat waste at 24 areas or "units."

- The wastes are typical of any industrial facility:
 - Chemicals, solvents, and cleaners
 - Mercury
 - Lead or other metals
- The Lab has dramatically reduced its yearly volume of waste since 2000.

The permit also covers

- Closure and future safety at three current and former disposal areas.
- Cleanup of contaminated soils and water.

LANL's current permit, in modified form, has been in effect since 1989.

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