



PRESS STATEMENT

Immediate Release
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HANFORD PLUTONIUM-CONTAMINATED EQUIPMENT LEADS TO FACILITY SHUTDOWN, CONTAMINATION FOUND OFFSITE

Plutonium Contaminated Equipment Found in Richland Location, Federal and State Inquiries
Launched into Where Else Contaminated Equipment May Have Been Shipped

Ohio Governor Deploys Hazmat Team Along with Rad Response Teams to Ohio Location

Richland, WA: A plutonium-contaminated suit and contaminated equipment led to the shutdown of high-hazard work at Hanford Plutonium Finishing Plant, leading to the discovery of plutonium contaminated equipment at a Richland, WA area location. Department of Energy Radiation Response Teams and Ohio hazmat team have made inquiries into contaminated equipment that was shipped off-site.

Contamination was first discovered on December 10, 2015 inside the suit of a Hanford worker assigned to clean-up at the Plutonium Finishing Plant, a heavily-contaminated facility that is being decommissioned and demolished.

Contamination was also discovered on a small cooling unit on the suits. Though the suits are discarded after use, the cooling units, called Vortex Coolers, are reused.

According to sources that contacted Hanford Challenge from the site, many of the Vortex Coolers were evaluated for contamination, with plutonium contamination found on some of the units.

Plutonium contamination was reportedly found on some Vortex units at the Hanford Fire station, which is on the Hanford Site, but outside of the Plutonium Finishing Plant. What's more, other Vortex units had been shipped off-site.

Reportedly, three or more of the units were shipped to a vendor's home in Richland, WA. A check of those units revealed a small amount of plutonium contamination. Though the amounts were small, contaminated equipment should never have been allowed to leave the Hanford Site.

Several units were being transported to Pennsylvania, and a stop was made in Cincinnati, apparently at a Mission Support Alliance facility (MSA is a Hanford contractor). Sources told Hanford Challenge that Ohio Governor Kasich ordered a hazmat unit, along with federal Radiation Response Teams, to the MSA

location to check on those units. Apparently, no contamination was found in either Ohio or Pennsylvania.

Sources also claim that President Obama was briefed because plutonium had gone missing from a government-owned plutonium factory.

Workers at Hanford have also alleged that possibly unqualified workers may have been utilized as a cost-saving measure in the facility.

Hanford Challenge raises the following questions for the Department of Energy:

1. Why has Hanford failed to notify the public about these incidents, despite having learned of the incidents weeks ago, and then only revealing it after being questioned by a reporter, tipped off by Hanford Challenge?
2. Have any workers been exposed to contamination? If so, how much contamination, and are workers at risk?
3. Has DOE identified, located and tested all Vortex units that were at one time in use at Hanford?
4. Were unqualified or uncertified workers used at the facility as a cost-saving measure?

Hanford Challenge's Executive Director, Tom Carpenter, stated, "What kind of operation is Hanford running out there? The failure of the government to notify the public is outrageous, and begs the question about what else they aren't choosing to reveal. There needs to be a serious and deep inquiry into how this could have happened and how to prevent it from happening again."