

Removing the sludge is one of the last major steps needed to finish cleaning up the 100 K Reactor Area.



The U.S. Department of Energy and contractor CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company transferred radioactive sludge from a facility near the Columbia River to safer storage in the center of the Hanford Site in southeastern Washington State.

Background

Approximately 35 cubic yards (27 cubic meters) of radioactive sludge was stored under 17 feet (5 meters) of water in a concrete basin adjacent to Hanford’s K West Reactor, one of nine former plutonium production reactors at the Hanford Site. The sludge was created when irradiated reactor fuel rods stored in the basin began to deteriorate years after production activities stopped in the 1980s. For 20 years, work has been underway to remove and package the material, eliminating a significant threat to the nearby Columbia River.

Mission

After using a mock-up facility to test equipment and train workers, CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company began transferring sludge in June 2018. By September 2019, crews safely removed all of the sludge and packaged it into 20 large containers. The containers were shipped to T Plant in the center of the Hanford Site for safe interim storage.

Future

Removing the sludge is a critical step in moving forward with other work near the K Reactors to reduce Hanford’s annual operating costs. The next major steps in cleanup will include removing debris from the basin, filling the basin with grout, and removing the basin to allow for placement of the last two Hanford reactors into interim safe storage.



The removal of sludge allows crews to remove the remaining legacy debris and water from the K West Basin.



A truck and trailer hauled sludge containers from the 100 K Reactor Area to T Plant for storage.



A sludge container leaves the 100 K Reactor Area on its way to T Plant for safe storage away from the Columbia River.