



## Fluor still investigating April 11 drum rupture

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Idaho National Laboratory's cleanup contractor is investigating to find out more about why a waste drum ruptured two weeks ago.

A three-person team re-entered the Accelerated Retrieval Project V facility on April 19 to collect data from the scene, contractor Fluor Idaho said in a news release. They wore sealed radiological suits with supplied air. Once inside, they took smear samples for radiological analysis, reset constant air monitors within the area and inspected the affected waste drum and nearby drums. The crews noted that, in addition to the 55-gallon drum that had ruptured, three other drums had their lids ejected due to excessive pressure.

A drum containing radioactive sludge at the U.S. Department of Energy's Radioactive Waste Management Complex west of Idaho Falls [ruptured on April 11, leading to a temporary shutdown](#) of the facility as well as a temporary suspension of shipments to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad, N.M.

No one was injured and no radioactivity was detected outside the building. Fluor said it resumed shipments to New Mexico after confirming that none of the waste that had already been certified for shipment was related to the waste stream involved in the incident.

The waste in the barrels was likely sent to Idaho in the late 1960s from the Rocky Flats Plant near Denver. Since 2012, the facility here has processed and repackaged about 9,500 such drums, removing liquids and prohibited items before they are certified and shipped to WIPP for permanent storage.

The drums involved in the April 11 had been processed earlier that day and were repackaged and staged for several hours before the rupture happened. The Fluor release said none of them had completed the final stages of treatment and been certified, which has to be done before shipping them.

Fluor said it plans to enter the building again soon to gather samples from the affected waste drums and recover other bulk samples for further analysis to determine its radiological and chemical properties. This will help a Causla Analysis Team figure out the likely cause of the April 11 rupture and prevent it from happening again.

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