

## Chem-Bio News

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**2. STUDY FINDS QUAKE RISK AT LOS ALAMOS:** *"A big earthquake and resultant fire could trigger potentially deadly releases of radioactive materials from Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico due to "major deficiencies" in the nuclear weapons lab's safety planning, federal safety experts warned Tuesday."*

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# CB Daily Report

## Chem-Bio News

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### DHS PROPOSES ANTHRAX PROTECTIONS FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

by Mickey McCarter

HS Today

October 28, 2009

"Federal rule would set tiers based on jobs."

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"As such the proposal outlines three tiers of protection. The first tier, reserved for responders conducting those dangerous activities or working in particularly dangerous sites, would require them to take 30-60 days of antibiotics, receive anthrax vaccination shots, wear a full outfit of personal protective equipment, and make full use of decontamination and hygiene processes.

The second tier, designated for responders who work in affected areas a lot, would include responders engaged in antibiotic distribution, emergency medical services, fire, rescue, policing, and traffic control. The regulation would require them to follow much the same precautions as those in the first tier, but it would permit modification of the protective measures based on the circumstances.

The third tier would cover those who have limited exposure to the affected anthrax area. Those responders would not require personal decontamination procedures, although the regulation would require personal protective equipment to be worn while in the affected area at all times. The third tier would cover personnel engaged in activities such as reporting to work or traveling through the affected area. They could include essential staff for maintaining critical infrastructure, hospital staff, government personnel, and volunteers.”

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“The proposed regulation will reside on the federal Web site at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) for 30 days for public comment.”

The full article can be found at: <http://www.hstoday.us/content/view/10832/128/>  
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## **STUDY FINDS QUAKE RISK AT LOS ALAMOS**

By Ralph Vartabedian  
Los Angeles Times  
October 28, 2009

“A big earthquake and resultant fire could trigger potentially deadly releases of radioactive materials from Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico due to "major deficiencies" in the nuclear weapons lab's safety planning, federal safety experts warned Tuesday.

The warning from the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board was sent to Energy Secretary Steven Chu, urging him to "execute both immediate and long-term actions."

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“In the course of designing a new building near the plutonium facility, engineers discovered that a previously known fault has the potential for causing far greater ground movement than they had calculated.”

The full article can be found at: <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-plutonium-los-alamos28-2009oct28,0,6966430.story>  
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## **EXPERTS WARN OF PROLIFERATION DANGERS POSED BY LASER ENRICHMENT**

By Martin Matishak  
Global Security Newswire  
October 28, 2009

“Technology like the kind called for at a proposed laser uranium enrichment facility in the United States could increase the threat of nuclear weapons and materials proliferation in other countries, a panel of experts warned this week.”

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“Laser technology has emerged as a possible alternative to centrifuge or gaseous diffusion to enrich uranium for nuclear fuel because of its comparatively low infrastructure cost and reduced power consumption needs. Those same attributes also make it a cause for concern about proliferation around the world.

Iran in 2003 admitted to the International Atomic Energy Agency that it had operated a laser uranium research program from 1991 to 2000 (see GSN, Nov. 11, 2003). A similar experiment was uncovered in South Korea in 2004, according to Ferguson. He said roughly 20 countries -- including Brazil, France and the United States -- have pursued the technology.

A consortium formed by General Electric, Hitachi Ltd. and Cameco Corp. aims to use an Australian laser enrichment technology known as separation of isotopes by laser excitation to enrich natural uranium hexafluoride gas in the uranium 235 isotope, according to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. In that form the element can sustain a fission chain reaction.

The company plans to conduct the project in two phases, a test program followed by operation of a commercial-scale enrichment plant, the commission said. The "test loop" began operating this summer at General Electric's nuclear fuel fabrication facility in Wilmington, N.C., and will verify "performance and reliability data" for a commercial plant."

The full article can be found at: [http://gsn.nti.org/gsn/nw\\_20091028\\_8484.php](http://gsn.nti.org/gsn/nw_20091028_8484.php)

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## **MORE HANFORD WORKERS COULD BE COMPENSATED**

By Annette Cary  
TriCity Herald  
October 29, 2009

“Less than 10 percent of former Hanford construction workers who likely would qualify for compensation for illnesses have applied to a federal program, said a Building Trades National Medical Screening Program official.

Representatives of the program held a meeting in Pasco on Wednesday night to discuss the screening and a Department of Labor program that provides compensation for Hanford workers who developed illnesses because of exposure to radiation or hazardous chemicals at the nuclear reservation. Nearly 100 attended.

As many as 25,000 former Hanford building trades workers may have developed illnesses covered by the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program, said Knut Ringen, principal investigator for the building trades screening program. But he estimated that less than 10 percent of those have applied.

The compensation program pays \$150,000 in compensation for cancers likely caused by radiation exposure and up to \$250,000 for wage loss and impairment caused by exposure to toxic substances, which could include radiation, chemicals, solvents, acids and metals. Medical expenses are covered, and if workers have died, their survivors may be eligible for compensation.

The program has paid out about \$420 million to former Hanford workers, including production workers, Ringen said. The claims approval rate was helped significantly by new eased rules for workers who developed cancer. About 1,000 claims were paid under the eased rules that otherwise would not have been."

The full article can be found at: [http://www.tricityherald.com/kennewick\\_pasco\\_richland/story/772379.html](http://www.tricityherald.com/kennewick_pasco_richland/story/772379.html)

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## **Chem-Demil News**

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### **DESERET CHEMICAL DEPOT - THE RESULTS ARE IN**

US Army Chemical Materials Agency

October 26, 2009

“Sampling data will support GA/Lewisite disposal process details.”

“The Battelle Hazardous Materials Research Center has completed analysis of samples from Deseret Chemical Depot’s (DCD’s) stockpile of GA nerve and Lewisite blister agent ton containers (TCs). The results will be used for design and permitting activities in support of the thermal destruction of the GA and Lewisite in a small-scale liquid incinerator (LIC) located within DCD’s storage area.

Because mercuric chloride was used as a catalyst in Lewisite production, lab technicians were not surprised to identify some mercury in the Lewisite. But they didn’t expect to find so much in the layers of solid, sludge-like material that has settled inside the TCs. The solids have never been sampled before and analysis shows 13 to 42 percent of it is mercury. “We never thought we would have anything to that level.” explains GA/Lewisite Project Manager Jim Clark. Additionally, as a principle component of Lewisite, high levels of arsenic were confirmed.

Sampling results show that the Lewisite TCs contain different concentrations of mercury, and operators will need to control the rate at which agent is fed into furnace. The small-scale LIC will be equipped with a specially designed pollution abatement and filtration system to cool and clean the exhaust gases, and to remove remaining particulates and metals like arsenic and mercury.

Workers will first drain the agent from the TC and send it to a storage collection tank. The solids will then be dissolved by filling the TC with 100 gallons of nitric acid and rotating the container to liquefy the contents. The remaining liquid will be pumped through a diffusion dialysis unit, which uses water to separate the metals from the nitric acid. The recovered nitric acid will be used to dissolve sludge in another TC and the remaining watery effluent will be safely shipped off site for disposal.

Each empty Lewisite TC will be rinsed three times; each time, rotating the TC for an hour with 100 gallons of water inside. The water will be drained and incinerated in the secondary chamber of the LIC.

An assessment of the GA nerve agent samples provided data consistent with previous analytical results. These containers will be drained directly into the LIC’s primary chamber. Sodium hydroxide will be used to clean the containers, followed by a triple water rinse.

Following the destruction of the GA nerve and Lewisite blister agent, the empty containers will be disposed of in accordance with hazardous waste regulatory requirements.

The sampling project also included the depot’s so-called “transparency” TCs—these containers were thought to be empty or contain Lewisite residue. Results confirmed no agent or agent residue in the small stockpile of transparency TCs, with the exception of one that was not sampled due to a defective sample tube. Thus, the contents of this container could not be confirmed and it will be processed with the other Lewisite containers. The remaining transparency TCs will be processed as secondary waste, each cut in half, cleaned and shipped to a hazardous waste landfill.

Final design and planning activities continue as TOCDF officials prepare the class 3 permit modification request for construction and operations of the small-scale LIC. Construction is scheduled to begin this fall and will continue through summer 2010. Destruction operations are expected to be completed in time to meet the April 2012 Chemical Weapons Convention Treaty deadline.

The full article can be found at: <http://www.cma.army.mil/include/docrendition.asp?DocID=003681710>

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## **PUEBLO CHEMICAL DEPOT AND LEXINGTON BLUE GRASS ARMY DEPOT - SOME WEAPONS TO BE DESTROYED SEPARATELY**

By John Norton  
The Pueblo Chieftain  
October 30, 2009

“Most of the 780,000 mortar rounds and artillery shells in the stockpile at the Pueblo Chemical Depot will be dismantled by robotic equipment and their contents washed out and neutralized by hot water. But the depot currently has 538 leaking weapons that have been packed in steel cylinders and can not safely be dismantled. When destruction of the stockpile gets under way, projected to begin in 2015, it’s anticipated that more leaking or corroded weapons will be found. Officials of the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives program, responsible for the project here and at the Blue Grass Army Depot in Kentucky, estimate the number could grow to 1,000 based on experiences at other depots.”

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“Ultimately, however, the decision on technology will be made by ACWA’s program manager after requests for proposals are put out, likely in 2014, according to Gary Anderson, manager of the local project. The EDS system was developed by the military and Sandia National Laboratory to destroy weapons that had been buried or tested and not exploded. Rather than risk transporting them to a destruction facility, the EDS goes to the site in a large semitrailer where the weapons are put into a chamber and cut open with explosives. The agent inside is then neutralized chemically.”

The full article can be found at:  
<http://www.chieftain.com/articles/2009/10/30/news/local/doc4aea83deec334633698606.txt>  
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## **REUSE PLAN PROPOSED FOR NEWPORT CHEMICAL DEPOT**

WTHR.com  
October 29, 2009

“A plan that proposes to open up much of the Army’s Newport Chemical Depot in western Indiana to business development could soon be sent to military officials.”

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“The depot reuse board made up of five Vermillion County residents is recommending that nearly 3,500 acres be set aside for potential development, along with 2,400 acres for natural areas and parkland and 1,200 acres for agriculture. The board expects to vote on the plan Nov. 19.”

The full article can be found at: <http://www.wthr.com/Global/story.asp?S=11407620>  
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