

West Valley prepares for next signature achievement: Main plant demolition



Photo provided

Workers at the West Valley Demonstration Project prepare a section of a ventilation duct to be cut inside the Vent Wash Room. The room had been used to support former reprocessing cells inside the main plant process building.

Workers continue to reduce risks and prepare to deactivate the main plant process building for what will be the **West Valley Demonstration Project's** most complex demolition since crews knocked down the vitrification facility in 2018.

As part of the latest work, crews are removing a 26-inch-diameter ventilation duct that carried exhaust from past operations at the MPPB. They are performing the work remotely to reduce exposure risk.

"The effort in the vent wash room involves extensive planning and deliberate execution to perform the work safely and compliantly," Steve Bousquet said, EM WVDP deputy federal project director for the Main Plant.

"The **WVDP** team continues to reduce legacy risks while protecting employees, the public and the environment."

The vent wash room had housed a ventilation “scrubber” that removed airborne particulates resulting from fuel reprocessing operations that ceased in 1972. The location supported former reprocessing cells inside the MPPB.

EM and prime contractor CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley have completed 14 of 28 cuts to the ventilation duct and removed seven of 19 sections of the duct from the vent wash room. Prior to this work, crews constructed a containment tent above the work area and an access door to support the project.

“Close work activities like this involve teamwork and sharing lessons learned throughout the process,” Tom Dogal said, CHBWV facility disposition manager. “The **WVDP** team used employee feedback to further improve execution while also adhering to enhanced COVID-19 protocols.”

Several other areas within the MPPB – including the product purification and chemical process cells, and a fuel receiving and storage facility – sent exhaust to the vent wash room through the ductwork. The exhaust was then directed to a ventilation exhaust cell where it was filtered before being discharged to the plant’s stack.