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## **WRPS named one of ‘America’s Safest Companies’**

RICHLAND, Wash. – *EHS Today*, a leading national occupational health and safety publication, has named Washington River Protection Solutions (WRPS) as one of “America’s Safest Companies.” The designation recognizes companies that exemplify excellence in safety leadership and promote a world-class safety culture.

“Over the past 12 years, safety has been the hallmark of our outstanding performance record as the Department of Energy’s (DOE’s) Tank Operations Contractor at Hanford,” said John Eschenberg, WRPS President and Chief Executive Officer. “We look out for each other and maintain a keen focus on safety requirements to ensure we all go home every day in the same healthy condition as when we arrived on the job.” It is because of this commitment that WRPS leads all contractors in the DOE-EM complex in safety performance over the past five years.

Winning organizations for the prestigious magazine award must demonstrate excellence in support from management and leadership, employee involvement in safety and health, and innovative solutions to safety challenges. They must also demonstrate illness and injury rates lower than the average for their industries, comprehensive training programs and evidence that prevention of incidents is the cornerstone of their safety process. Good communication about the value of safety is also required.

WRPS received many other significant safety awards in 2020, including the DOE Voluntary Protection Program’s Star of Excellence for the sixth consecutive year. It also received several awards from the National Safety Council, including the Industry Leader & Occupational Excellence award, the Safety Leadership award and the Community Advancement award. In addition, WRPS was recognized by the Council for One Million Safe Work Hours.

“The common theme among these awards is employee ownership and engagement throughout the entire company and in the community,” Eschenberg said. “As one of “America’s Safest Companies,” we are proud to be setting the standard for safety excellence in our industry.”

### **About WRPS**

WRPS, a prime contractor to the DOE Office of River Protection, is responsible for the safe and efficient management of radioactive and hazardous wastes stored in Hanford’s underground tanks while preparing to deliver the waste to Hanford’s Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant for vitrification.

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## AMERICA'S SAFEST COMPANIES AWARDS

### **Washington River Protection Solutions— Hanford Tank Operations Contractor**

When challenges arise at WRPS, proactive thinking allows for improved safety conditions, morale and trust among the entire company.

Adrienne Selko

#### **Washington River Protection Solutions—Hanford Tank Operations Contractor**

**Waste remediation**

**Richland, WA**

**3000 employees | 1 sites | 650 EHS professionals**

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**Washington River Protection Solutions** (WRPS), a waste remediation company, ties its safety success to its work at the U.S. Department of Energy's Hanford site. For the past 12 years, the company has been a leading safety performer across the complex. In 2019 the company received the VPP DOE Star of Excellence Award.

“WRPS adapts to changing conditions remarkably, and when challenges arise, proactive and innovative thinking allows for improved safety conditions, morale and trust among the entire

company,” explains R. Thomas Perkes, project manager, Industrial Safety.

The company’s safety philosophy rests on eight beliefs:

1. Zero accidents is achievable and is our goal.
2. Safety is the top priority and is owned by each worker.
3. When in doubt on safety ask questions, and if you see something unsafe stop work.
4. Safety can always be improved and provide multiple venues for employees to engage in safety.
5. Actively care for safety and look out for your co-workers.
6. Seek innovative solutions and address safety concerns immediately.
7. Proactive behavior to avoid or minimize surprises.
8. Value integrity and s safety culture mindset.

These beliefs are the foundation of the company’s accident prevention councils. One council, called the President’s Council, is comprised of senior management. There are also six employees’ councils. “Employees who volunteer for these councils are allowed to dedicate up to one-quarter of their work hours to make WRPS a better place,” says Perkes.

In addition to these councils there are many other ways for employees to participate in safety, including the following:

- Employee walk down of areas of buildings on safety inspections.
- Participation in various safety assessments and audits working in a team atmosphere and then identifying strategies, noteworthy practices, improvement areas, and findings.
- Employees can take part in behavioral safety programs.
- Employees are encouraged to expand their safety knowledge through national safety programs as well as pursuing safety certification through the Board of Certified Safety Professionals (BCSP). The company offers classes to help employees prepare for safety exams. They also reach out to those with certifications to encourage them to become champions in spreading the safety message.

All of these safety efforts are paying off. WRPS reports that in two safety culture surveys taken in 2020 and conducted by an independent source, nearly every area had shown improvement since the 2017 survey.

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