



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

OFFICE OF
**ENVIRONMENTAL
MANAGEMENT**

Employee-Led Facility Efficiencies Improve Workflow at Hanford Tank Farms

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A change trailer at Hanford's tank farm buzzes with activity as employees don or doff personal protective equipment. The facility recently underwent improvements to increase safety and efficiency for employees.

RICHLAND, Wash. – **EM's Office of River Protection** (ORP) and **Hanford** tank farms contractor Washington River Protection Solutions (WRPS) recently collaborated to increase efficiency and further enhance safety by improving a facility where workers don and doff protective gear.

Donny Lapierre, a WRPS nuclear chemical operator, designed the worker-friendly improvements at a change trailer where employees in protective

clothing enter and exit a series of Hanford tank farms. They go there after checking out a mask and rack for holding an air bottle for their self-contained breathing apparatus.

Lapierre increased the number of air bottles stored at the trailer so they move only between the trailer and [Hanford Fire Department](#), which fills them. Previously, workers handled a bottle up to eight times as it moved between storage, the fire department, and the trailer.

“Less handling of the bottles means less chance of damage or injury,” Lapierre said.

The trailer supports employees working at four tank farms, and as many as 100 people wear protective gear at once. The trailer is the size of a large double-wide mobile home. Half is dedicated to getting employees suited up for work — as many as 25 at a time — and half for turning in equipment and clothing when their shifts are done.

Workers don coveralls and shoe covers, rubber overshoes, gloves, and other required personal protective equipment in the trailer. All those items must be stored there, many in multiple sizes and types, so space is crucial.



Donny Lapierre, nuclear chemical operator with Washington River Protection Solutions (WRPS), left, shows John Eschenberg, WRPS manager, improvements at a Hanford Site tank farm employee change trailer.

To cut down on clutter, Lapierre installed a coat rack under the lip of a work station counter to give employees a place to hang jackets and hats.

A printer was added to assist employees in reviewing and printing work package instructions. A radio base station also was installed, providing an alternative to land lines and cell phones, and improving emergency communication.

The improvements come as ORP and WRPS gear up for retrieving waste in tank AX-102 starting this summer, when crews will install a waste retrieval system.