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Washington River Protection Solutions receives 2 national safety awards

RICHLAND, Wash. – Washington River Protection Solutions (WRPS) received two safety awards at the annual Voluntary Protection Program Participants' Association (VPPPA) national conference this week in Grapevine, Texas.

WRPS, the Hanford tank operations contractor for the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of River Protection, received the VPP Innovation Award for developing a tool that will help reduce worker exposure during surveys of radioactive equipment used to retrieve tank waste.

During the waste retrieval process, several long-length pieces of equipment that are submerged in the underground tanks must be removed. Upon removal, radiation and contamination surveys are performed to minimize exposure to personnel and facilitate disposal.

The innovative tool was developed and constructed by a team of workers from WRPS' radiological control, waste management and construction organizations. It features lightweight piping with nine survey points built in to properly position electronic dosimeters so that dose rates can be remotely recorded. The tool is then moved down the length of the long-length equipment until the survey is completed. In addition to minimizing exposure to workers, the tool cuts the amount of time it takes to survey a large piece of equipment by 50 percent.

WRPS also received the VPP Star of Excellence Award for maintaining a total recordable injury case rate 75 percent lower than the industry average.

"These awards demonstrate not only the steadfast commitment of our employees to working safely on a daily basis, but also their continuous effort to improve worker protection," said Dave Olson, WRPS president and project manager. "We're grateful to be recognized from such a well-respected organization and a leader in the safety and health industry."

VPPPA is a member-based association with a network of more than 2,500 companies and worksites that are involved in or in the process of applying to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's or DOE's Voluntary Protection Programs. WRPS was awarded VPP Star status in 2014.

About WRPS

WRPS is a limited liability corporation owned by AECOM and Energy Solutions, with AREVA as its primary subcontractor. Its mission is to reduce the environmental risk posed by 56 million

gallons of radioactive and chemical waste stored in 177 underground tanks near the center of the 586-square-mile Hanford Site in southeastern Washington state.

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