

For Immediate Release

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## Upgraded Fire Suppression System Enhances Canister Transporter Safety at the Savannah River Site

AIKEN, S.C. (August 23, 2021) – The Department of Energy’s Office of [Environmental Management](#) has installed an improved fire suppression system on a one-of-a-kind [Savannah River Site](#) (SRS) vehicle that moves high-level waste canisters.

The [shielded canister transporter](#) (SCT) at SRS is a specially designed vehicle that is more than 18 feet tall, 25 feet wide, and weighs 235,000 pounds. It moves canisters of vitrified high-level waste produced at the [Defense Waste Processing Facility](#) (DWPF) to safe interim storage at the [Glass Waste Storage Buildings](#) (GWSB). The SCT also double-stacks stored canisters to increase storage capacity in one of those storage buildings. Each stainless steel canister is 10 feet tall and weighs approximately 5,000 pounds when filled.

SRS liquid waste contractor Savannah River Remediation (SRR) upgraded the fire suppression system on the SCT, including improvements to an operator’s ability to safely exit in the unlikely event of a fire emergency on the SCT. Due to the location of the SCT operator, the extensive radiation shielding blocking visibility to the engine compartments, and the engine noise created by SCT operations, the need for an automatic fire suppression system was identified as a necessary improvement.

SRR Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Project Manager Mark Schmitz said he is pleased with the work on the SCT, which was completed by SRR and small disadvantaged business contractor FQS Bear.

“Ensuring our high-level waste canisters are safely stored is part of the ownership SRR takes in the liquid waste mission at SRS,” Schmitz said. “Anything we can do to enhance safety is carefully evaluated and applied. This new system was engineered to be reliable and technically advanced, while meeting national fire protection standards.”

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The permanently installed system on the SCT is designed for heavy-duty mobile equipment and consists of heat-detection devices for automatic activations, six liquid agent tanks, and control units for each of the SCT's two engines. A system display is in the cab of the SCT, which shows the system status and allows for manual operation, if necessary.

DOE-Savannah River Assistant Manager for Waste Disposition Jim Folk said the SCT now has a system that has met rigorous testing standards for loss prevention.

"The SCT is a large and complex vehicle. Its importance to the execution of the liquid waste mission cannot be understated," Folk said. "Having a certified fire protection system on this one-of-a-kind vehicle helps ensure we can continue to move canisters from DWPF to the GWSBs efficiently and safely."



Cutline: Savannah River Site employees recently upgraded the site's shielded canister transporter with an advanced fire suppression system.

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Cutline: A view of the liquid agent tanks for the fire suppression system of the shielded canister transporter at the Savannah River Site.

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