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Media Contacts:

Sonya Goines, U.S. Department of Energy
(803) 646-2788
Sonya.Goines@srs.gov

Colleen Hart, SRMC
(803) 208-2428
Colleen.Hart@srs.gov

Regulators Concur on Third Savannah River Site Waste Tank Milestone in One Year

AIKEN, S.C. (February 10, 2025) — The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) [Office of Environmental Management](#) (EM) has achieved its third radioactive waste removal milestone in one calendar year at the [Savannah River Site](#) (SRS) — now marking three waste tanks staged ahead of schedule for next steps in the closure process.

EM received concurrence from the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that SRS has successfully removed waste from Tank 4 and may now proceed to waste sampling and analysis of that tank.

Completing that phase of work on the waste tank, called preliminary cease waste removal (PCWR), is a regulatory milestone outlined in the SRS Federal Facility Agreement (FFA). The FFA establishes a procedural framework, including liquid waste tank milestone agreements, such as the schedule for waste removal and operational tank closures, and other site cleanup priorities.

Savannah River Mission Completion (SRMC) is EM's [liquid waste](#) contractor responsible for safely treating and disposing of the millions of gallons of waste remaining in the [underground tanks](#) at SRS, as well as closing them.

Tank 4 is not the first PCWR completed by SRMC ahead of schedule. PCWR was achieved for [Tank 10](#) in May, seven months ahead of its FFA deadline, and for [Tank 9](#) in October, more than a year ahead of its deadline. Tank 4 PCWR was also completed a year ahead of the agreed-upon deadline.

PCWR is a regulatory milestone for old-style tanks that designates agreement between EM, SCDES, and EPA that, based on preliminary information, there is reasonable assurance that performance objectives for tank closure will be met. Also, the concurrence means that work can begin on the sampling and analysis phase of the tank closure process. This next phase will verify these conclusions, based on laboratory analysis of any remaining material and final residual volume determination, prior to stabilization and final isolation of the waste tank.

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Jim Folk, DOE-Savannah River assistant manager for waste disposition, said significant waste retrieval and tank closure milestones at [SRS](#), such as PCWR, demonstrate that EM is committed to completing the SRS liquid waste mission through tank waste cleanup.

“EM and our contractor, Savannah River Mission Completion, remain committed to working together to remove the highest risk from the tank waste at SRS,” Folk said. “Continuously completing preliminary cease waste removal milestones ahead of schedule shows the dedication this team has to be successful.”

James Harris, Waste Retrieval and Tank Closure director for SRMC, said PCWR is not an easy task, but the talented team at SRMC makes it happen.

“We perform numerous tasks within the SRS tank farms that are complicated, complex and critical,” Harris said. “The ability to achieve PCWR is a by-product of the highly integrated effort that involves everyone from our skilled craftspeople to operations, maintenance, integration, and radiological control crews; engineering teams; and project managers.”

Tank 4 is an underground storage tank placed into service in 1961. It is 75 feet in diameter and 24.5 feet tall and has a capacity of 750,000 gallons.



Cutline: The U.S. Department of Energy Office of Environmental Management achieved preliminary cease waste removal for Tank 4 in F Tank Farm, pictured, at the Savannah River Site a year ahead of schedule.