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SRS Begins Liquid Tightness Test of Saltstone Disposal Unit 7

AIKEN, S.C. (March 1, 2021) – This week the Savannah River Site (SRS) will begin a liquid tightness test on the second mega-volume [saltstone disposal unit](#) (SDU) constructed at SRS. This liquid tightness test will qualify the newly constructed SDU for use, verifying it safe to store up to 33 million gallons of solidified, decontaminated salt solution produced at SRS.

Beginning March 1, 2021, Savannah River Remediation (SRR), the liquid waste contractor at SRS, will begin filling SDU 7 with water to check for any signs of leakage visible on the exterior. It will take three to four weeks to fill the unit with approximately 33 million gallons, equivalent to the amount of water that would fill 55 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

After approximately four feet of water is added to the unit, about 400 gallons of a dye/tracer will be introduced. The fluorescent yellow/green dye is certified by NSF International, an independent public health and safety organization, for use in drinking water and is commonly used in dye/tracer tests. The dye is being added as an additional means to confirm liquid tightness and will assist in leak detection.

The test is expected to take six to eight weeks. Once the test is complete, SDU 7 will be drained and the dyed water will be discharged to drainage basins on site for a controlled release to the environment. When discharged (anticipated for late March 2021), the water will traverse over land and will empty into an onsite tributary to the Savannah River.

Once the test is complete, SDU 7 will be drained, and the water will be pumped from the unit to drainage basins on site for a controlled discharge that will ultimately enter the Savannah River. Because this dye is safe for the environment, there are no health, safety, or environmental concerns with discharging this water in the SRS ecosystem or the Savannah River.

The SDUs are a critical part of the liquid waste system as they are permanent disposal units that will hold solidified decontaminated salt solution at SRS. SDU 7 is the second mega-volume SDU at SRS. The first, SDU 6, is already in operation.

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Cutline: This week the Savannah River Site (SRS) will begin a liquid tightness test on the second megavolume saltstone disposal unit (SDU), SDU 7 (far right), constructed at SRS. This liquid tightness test will qualify the newly constructed SDU for use, verifying it safe to store up to 33 million gallons of solidified, decontaminated salt solution produced at SRS.