U.S. DEPARTMENT of ENERGY

Technical Area 54, Area G

Newport News Nuclear BWXT-Los Alamos, LLC (N3B) is the legacy cleanup contractor for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Environmental Management Los Alamos Field Office (EM-LA).

Opened in 1957, Area G is a waste management and storage location within Technical Area 54 (TA-54) at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL).

Background

Area G is focused on the safe storage, characterization and remediation of trans-uranic (TRU) and low-level and mixed low-level radioactive waste. Efforts are centered on processing these materials for shipment to approved off-site facilities for disposal. This work plays a vital role in reducing long-term risk, advancing the LANL legacy cleanup mission, and supporting the national security mission.

Area G includes a network of subsurface disposal units—32 pits, 212 shafts and four trenches—located approximately 10 to 65 feet below the surface. These structures were developed to manage radioactive materials generated from LANL operations during the Cold War era.

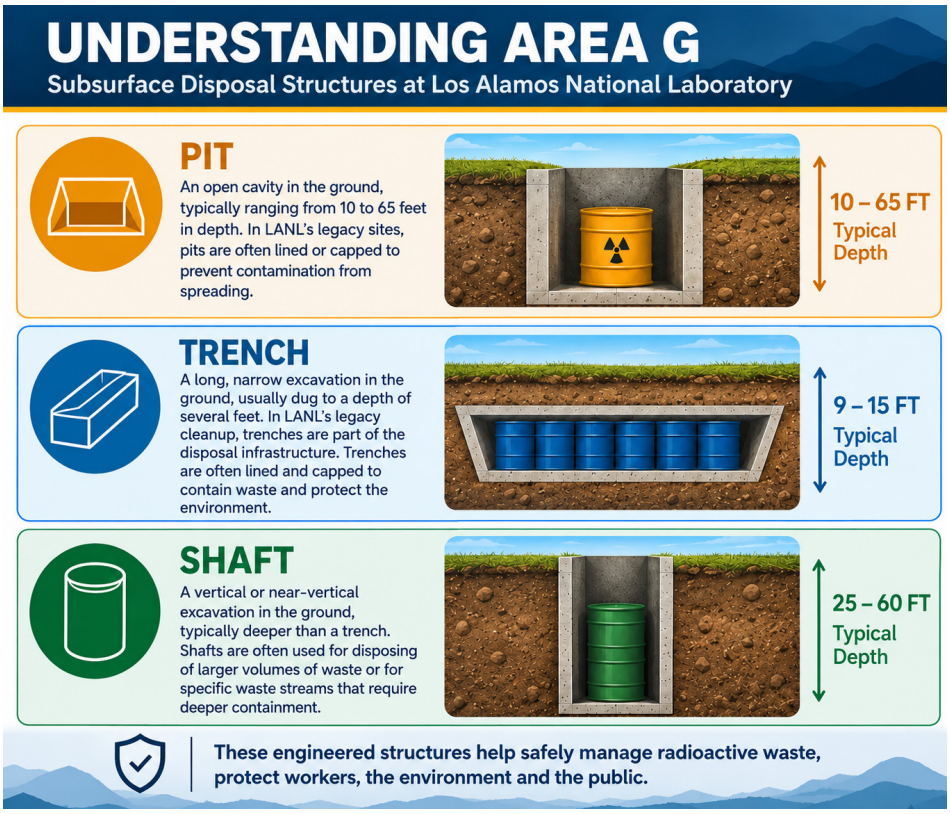
Key Takeways

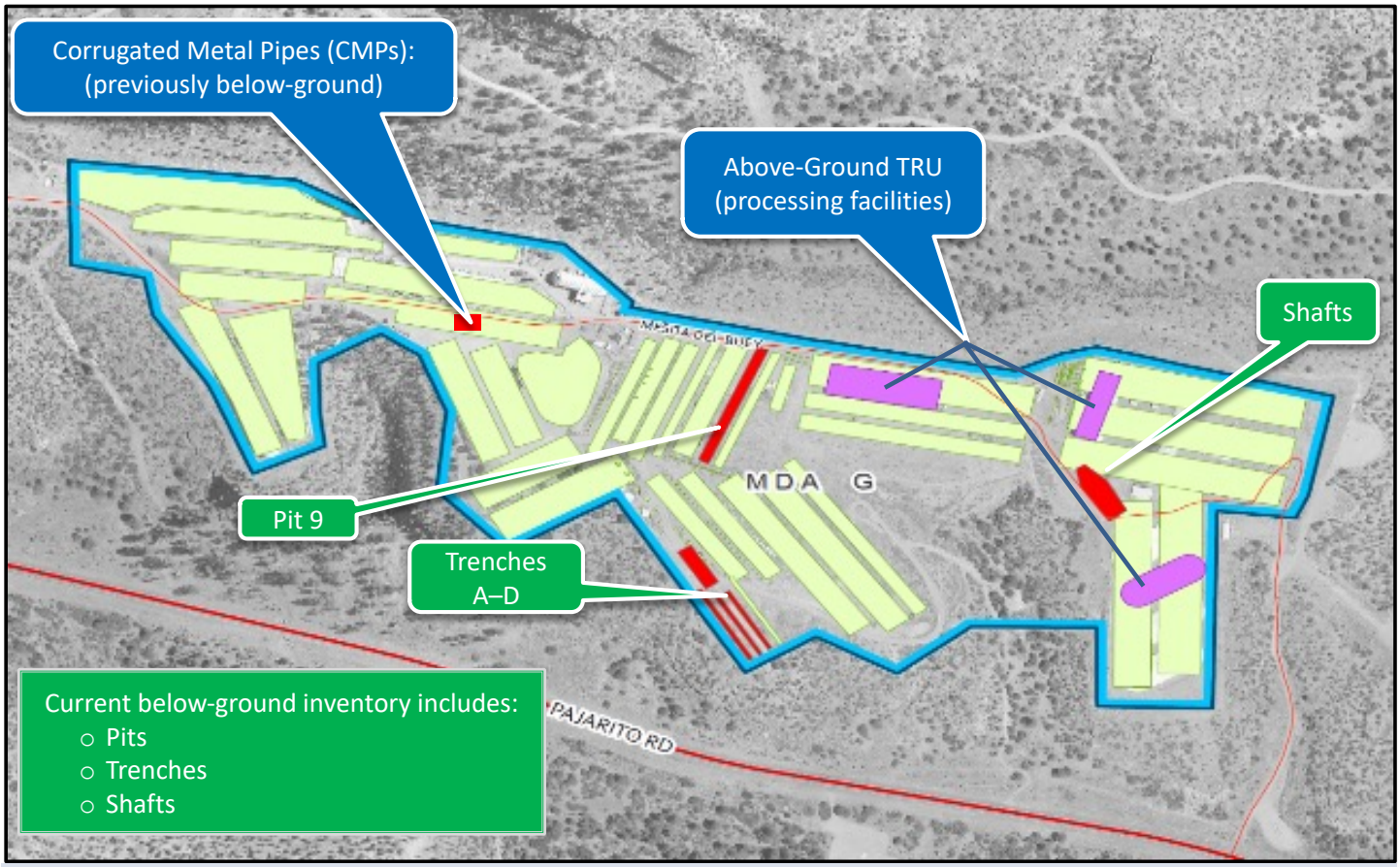
- Safe and effective off-site waste disposal supports ongoing LANL operations and reduces risk to workers and nearby communities.
- Over 90% of above-ground TRU waste at Area G has been safely shipped to WIPP.

TRU waste shipment departs for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP)

Ensuring Safety

- TRU waste containers are stored in engineered dome structures covered with fire-retardant fabric and equipped with fire detection and air monitoring systems; these dome structures are routinely monitored and inspected.
- TRU waste originates from defense-related research and activities at LANL prior to October 1, 1999 and is managed to protect workers, the environment and the public throughout storage and handling.
- Prior to shipment, each container and its contents undergo non-destructive analysis and certification to meet the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Waste Acceptance Criteria. Non-destructive analysis of waste material refers to the evaluation of the composition, structure or hazardous contents of waste without altering, destroying or physically sampling it. This approach minimizes safety risks and is widely used with hazardous, radioactive and industrial waste.





Area G site map

- TRU waste is safely transported to WIPP in southeastern New Mexico, the nation's only licensed repository for defense-generated TRU waste, where it is placed 2,150 feet underground for permanent disposal in a 2,000-foot thick bedded salt formation.
- Waste containers designated for WIPP—including drums, standard waste boxes and 10-drum overpacks—are placed inside shipping containers, called Transuranic Package Transporter Model 2 or TRUPACT-II, that meet Nuclear Regulatory Commission standards. These containers are tested under extreme conditions to ensure safety. In addition to shipping TRU waste, Area G activities also involve transporting low-level waste (LLW) and mixed low-level waste (MLLW) to approved off-site facilities. ■

Area G waste shipped to disposal sites includes*:

- TRU - 1,195.77 m^3
- MLLW - 527.51 m^3
- LLW - 4,046.28 m^3

*October 2018 to September 2026

Standard Waste Boxes safely stored while awaiting shipment to WIPP

TRU waste staged for WIPP transport

N3B Los Alamos
Cleaning Up Today for a Safer Tomorrow

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