

Sitewide Categorical Exclusion for Outdoor Tests, Experiments on Materials and Equipment Components

Introduction

As defined in the U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) Richland Operations Office Integrated Management System Procedure, *NEPA Analysis at Hanford*, a sitewide categorical exclusion is:

An application of DOE categorical exclusions described in 10 CFR 1021, Appendices A and B, which may apply to Hanford Site proposed actions (activities) that are “sitewide” in nature and extent, which the cognizant DOE Hanford NCO has determined fit within the scope (i.e., same nature and intent, and of the same or lesser scope) of DOE categorical exclusions described in 10 CFR 1021 Appendices A and B. The cognizant DOE Hanford NCO may issue specific sitewide categorical exclusions for use on proposed actions in which separate DOE approval to proceed is not required.

The nature of the proposed action subject of this sitewide categorical exclusion, as well as guidance to implement this exclusion as described herein, may be revised to reflect contemporary experience from the application of this exclusion; changes to, or development of, relevant policy and guidance; and changes to DOE’s categorical exclusions resulting from future rulemakings.

Proposed Action

The DOE’s Richland Operations Office and Office of River Protection propose to conduct outdoor tests and experiments on materials and components at locations on and nearby the Hanford Site.

Location of Action

On and near the Hanford Site, Richland, Washington.

Description of Proposed Action

DOE’s proposed action is to perform outdoor tests and experiments for the development, quality assurance, or reliability of materials and equipment. These activities would include, but not be limited to, burn and combustion tests, impact tests, drop tests, puncture tests, water-immersion tests, and thermal tests. A variety of chemical, biological, and physical studies, experiments, and research and development activities associated with conventional laboratory operations involving materials and equipment also would be undertaken.

In some instances, developmental activities would be necessary to enable outdoor tests and experiments. Accordingly, DOE would undertake indoor, bench-scale work such as the design,

tests and experiments, and modification of materials and equipment components that are integral to the proposed outdoor tests and experiments.

The implementation of these proposed activities may generate small quantities of solid, hazardous, radioactive, polychlorinated biphenyl and/or asbestos wastes. They also may result in the generation of uncontaminated liquids. Consistent with DOE's procedures that implement NEPA (10 CFR 1021), DOE would undertake actions foreseeably necessary to implement this proposed action, and therefore, would manage these wastes and liquids in compliance with DOE orders, and federal, state and local regulations and guidelines. Wastes would be packaged, staged for transport, transported, and disposed of at onsite or offsite facilities. Byproduct liquids would be discharged to nearby onsite or offsite facilities, such as the City of Richland treatment works. In addition, DOE would move equipment and materials necessary to perform outdoor tests and experiments onto and within the Hanford Site, as necessary. Further, DOE would erect temporary structures, if needed to perform the tests and experiments.

Applicable Categorical Exclusion

DOE's Categorical Exclusion B3.11:

Outdoor tests and experiments for the development, quality assurance, or reliability of materials and equipment (including, but not limited to, weapon system components), under controlled conditions that would not involve source, special nuclear, or byproduct materials. Covered activities may include, but are not limited to, burn tests (such as tests of electric cable fire resistance or the combustion characteristics of fuels), impact tests (such as pneumatic ejector tests using earthen embankments or concrete slabs designated and routinely used for that purpose), or drop, puncture, water-immersion, or thermal tests.

Implementing Guidance

This sitewide categorical exclusion may be applied to activities under the proposed actions that are "sitewide" in nature and extent. For example, this exclusion may be implemented as a one-time yearly application in instances where the proposed action would involve a series of outdoor tests and experiments intended to demonstrate the same proof-of-concept, or same principle.

Application of this sitewide categorical exclusion requires compliance with the Richland Integrated Management System Procedure, *NEPA Analysis at Hanford*. Sitewide categorical exclusions are determined solely by the cognizant DOE Hanford NCO and are applied through a screening process which documents that the proposed action:

1. Fits within the scope of actions identified in a DOE Hanford NCO-approved sitewide categorical exclusion

2. Meets the eligibility requirements for Appendix B categorical exclusion (“integral elements”) of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, B(1) through B(4)
3. Is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (see 40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1)) or with cumulatively significant impacts (see 40 CFR 1508.25(a)(2))
4. Is absent extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposed action
5. Is not located on nor directly impacts the Hanford Reach National Monument, Rattlesnake Mountain, Gable Mountain, Gable Butte, within ¼ mile of the Columbia River, other known Traditional Cultural Properties, or properties of historic, archaeological or architectural significance designated by Federal, state or local governments or properties eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, and
6. Is not located on nor cause direct impacts to sensitive species or their habitats, such as old-growth sagebrush.

This sitewide categorical exclusion may not be applied to proposed actions that would involve the construction of new buildings or permanent structures, or would require renovations or modifications to existing buildings and structures, unless such modifications would be incidental to the tests or experiments (for example, equipment change out, modified electrical service). It also may not be applied to outdoor activities that would require the development of, or modification to, roads or utilities unless the modifications would be temporary and contiguous to a developed area where active utilities and currently used roads are readily accessible.


This sitewide categorical exclusion may not be applied to tests and experiments that would involve source, special nuclear, or byproduct materials.

Compliance Action

I have determined that the proposed action meets the requirements for Categorical Exclusion B3.11 and that there are no extraordinary circumstance related to this action that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the action; this action is not “connected” to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts, and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211. All activities to be conducted under this Sitewide Categorical Exclusion Determination must be documented with the NEPA Review Screening Form (see Hanford Site Form RL-721) pursuant to *NEPA Analysis at Hanford* and demonstrably meet the criteria described in 1 through 6 above. Accordingly, I have determined that the proposed action may be categorically excluded from further NEPA review and documentation. This exclusion is being implemented as a one-time yearly application for the proposed action described herein.



Ralph W. Russell, DOE NEPA Compliance Officer



Date