

NOTICE

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) announces its application to the New Mexico Environment Department for a Class 3 modification of the White Sands Test Facility (WSTF) Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Permit (Permit). The modification consists of a change of regulatory status for three Solid Waste Management Units (SWMUs) corrective action complete without controls. The expected date of application submittal to the Hazardous Waste Bureau is on or about November 30, 2026. The exact location of WSTF is 12600 NASA Road, Las Cruces, NM 88012. The approximate location of this facility is six miles north of the intersection of NASA Road and US Highway 70, east of Las Cruces, NM.

A 60-day comment period will commence on August 31, 2026, and continued until October 31, 2026. Letters containing the public notice were mailed to all parties listed in the New Mexico Environment Department Hazardous Waste Bureau interested persons list for WSTF. A public meeting will be held from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on September 29, 2026, at Highland Elementary School in Las Cruces, New Mexico. A copy of the Class 3 modification request is posted at the Branigan Library bulletin board, and copies of the modification request and all supporting documentation can be viewed at this website: <https://www.nasa.gov/general/rcra-permit-modification/>

The application for Class 3 Permit modification provides documentation that regulatory requirements for closure without controls have been met at each of these three SWMUs. These SWMUs have been permanently removed from service at WSTF. The table below lists each of these sites, site contaminants, and closure activities completed for each SWMU.

Site	Contaminants	Closure Activities
SWMU 10 – 200 Area Hazardous Waste Transmission Lines	Industrial wastewater containing spent solvents	Transmission line removal, confirmation soil sampling, risk assessment
SWMU 29 – Small Arms Range at Second TDRS Ground Terminal (STGT)	Copper from spent ammunition	Spent ammunition recovery and soil removal, confirmation soil sampling, risk assessment
SWMU 54 – 500 Area Former Oxidizer Burner	Dinitrogen tetroxide	Confirmation soil sampling, risk assessment

The 200 Area Hazardous Waste Transmission Lines (HWTL; SWMU 10) comprise a network of mostly 3-inch (in.) stainless-steel and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) underground pipelines installed at depths of 1 to 6 feet below ground surface. The HWTLs were designed to gravity-drain hazardous waste discharged from the 200 Area Laboratory Complex to the 600 Area HWMU Impoundments. The stainless steel portions of SWMU 10 ran on the southeast and northwest sides of the 200 Area buildings, eventually joining at a point southwest of the complex. Beyond this juncture, a single PVC line extended more than 2,500 ft southwest to the 600 Area HWMU impoundments. These lines were removed and an investigation of soils immediately beneath the former line locations was completed that included analyses for all identified and suspected hazardous constituents contained in the transferred wastewater. Soils were sampled at 46 locations, collecting soil samples from depths of 0.5 and 2 feet below the former line depth. Results of the investigation were evaluated to verify that soils affected by operation of the former HWTL do not contain residual contamination that presents a risk to human health and the environment.

The former small arms firing range (SWMU 29) was used by security personnel. Lead bullets, with and without copper jackets, were discharged at these firing ranges and allowed to accumulate on site. As there is no evidence of disposal of other hazardous wastes at the ranges, potential contaminants consist of the metals used in the manufacture and discharge of small arms ammunition, including antimony, arsenic, copper, iron, lead, tin, and zinc. Corrective measures at the former firing range accomplished the objectives of removal and recycling of spent ammunition scraps and fragments, removal and disposal of potentially contaminated soil, and then verification that the soils within and adjacent to the firing range does not contain residual contamination that presents a risk to human health and the environment.

The 500 Area Former Oxidizer Burner (SWMU 54) was taken out of service on or before June 1973. The burner was used to dispose of excess and off-spec oxidizer generated by test operations at the 300 and 400 Areas. The oxidizer was dinitrogen tetroxide (N₂O₄) that was vented via the burner stack at a height of 20 feet above ground. Due to the low boiling point and high vapor pressure of N₂O₄, any potential oxidizer released would have become vapor and dissipated into the air. An investigation was completed in May 2024 that included soil sampling at eleven locations, collecting soil samples from depth of 1 and 5 feet below ground. Results of the investigation were evaluated to verify that soils affected by burner operations do not contain residual contamination that presents a risk to human health and the environment.

The owner and operator of the facility is:
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center
White Sands Test Facility
POC: Mr. Darryl C. Gaines, WSTF Director
P.O. Box 20
Las Cruces, NM 88004-0020

If you have any comments about the re-designation of these SWMUs from active to Corrective Action Complete without controls, and you want your comments to be made as part of the permit review process, you must submit your comments in writing to this address: Ms. Melissa Milner, Permit Programs Manager; New Mexico Environment Department; Hazardous Waste Bureau; 2905 Rodeo Park Drive E, Building 1; Santa Fe, New Mexico; 87505; (505) 476-6000. Additionally, the permittee's compliance history during the life of the permit being modified is available from Ms. Milner. Other comments and questions may be submitted verbally.

With your comments, please refer to the facility name or send a copy of this notice along with your comments. This information is necessary for the Department to respond accurately to the correct permit modification request. Please include a legible return mailing address. Once the Department has completed its final review of the application, the Department's notice will be published in the legal section of a newspaper circulated near the facility location.

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