

About WCS

Waste Control Specialists (WCS) operates a licensed facility for the treatment, storage and disposal of low-level radioactive waste (LLRW). Located on a 600-ft. thick, nearly impermeable red-bed clay formation, the WCS site ensures safe and permanent disposal of radioactive waste by taking advantage of this unique natural barrier.

Facilities

Texas Compact Waste Facility (CWF)

The CWF is owned and licensed by the State of Texas, operated by WCS, providing a solution to the long-term need for disposal of LLRW for Texas and Vermont and the 34 U.S. states that do not have access to a compact disposal facility.

Types of waste: Class A, B and C low-level radioactive waste (LLRW)

Federal Waste Facility (FWF)

The FWF was constructed with the sole purpose of disposing low-level radioactive waste that is the responsibility of the Federal Government as defined by the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Policy Act, Amended.

Types of waste: Class A, B and C low-level radioactive waste (LLRW), mixed low-level radioactive waste (MLLRW)

Byproduct Facility

The existing waste disposed in the Byproduct Facility was shipped from the Fernald cleanup efforts outside of Cincinnati, Ohio.

Types of waste: 11.e(2) byproduct material including uranium metal products

Hazardous/TSCA/Exempt Waste Facility

WCS currently has extensive authorizations and permits allowing the receipt, treatment and disposal of hazardous, Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) and LLRW wastes. The TCEQ approved exemption process allows for the disposal of roughly 10% of the Class A limit in this disposal facility.

Treatment Technologies: Chemical Oxidation; Chemical Reduction; Deactivation; Neutralization; Stabilization; Controlled Reaction; Micro- and Macro-Encapsulation

Types of Waste

Low-level radioactive waste (LLRW)

LLRW includes items that have been contaminated with radioactive material or have become radioactive through exposure to radiation. LLRW is generated at facilities such as power plants, oil and gas operations, hospitals and research institutions.

Mixed low-level radioactive waste (MLLW)

MLLW is LLRW that includes a hazardous waste component. MLLW is generated at various Department of Energy facilities around the country in addition to certain commercial facilities.

NORM and TENORM

- Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material (NORM) and Technologically Enhanced Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material (TENORM) are materials that contain radioactive isotopes, or radionuclides, that are naturally present in the Earth's crust.
- Wastes that contain NORM and TENORM are generated by industries that extract and process natural resources including Oil and Gas Production, Petrochemical Refining and Manufacturing, and Mining.

Resource Conservation & Recovery Act (RCRA)/Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA)

Commonly accepted waste types:

- Soils and construction debris from the demolition of commercial and federal facilities (can include PCBs and asbestos material)
- Liquid drummed waste for solidification and disposal

Byproduct material

11.e(2) byproduct material including uranium metal products.

By the Numbers

Safety

- Over 1,200 days worked since WCS experienced a lost-time accident (Updated July 2020)
- The average exposure for WCS radiological employees is less than 10% of the NRC regulatory limit of 5 rem/year for radiological workers.
- Radioactive waste has been transported to the WCS site for over a decade without a single safety or environmental issue.

Environment

WCS has an extensive monitoring program to ensure the safety of the community and the environment at all times. WCS monitors the primary pathways of potential exposure: air, soil and ambient radiation. Additional pathways monitored are groundwater, surface water, wastewater, sediment, vegetation and fauna. WCS also operates a meteorological monitoring program.

- Over 300 monitoring wells
- Air monitoring stations
- Ambient radiation monitoring stations

Groundwater

WCS' site analyses unequivocally demonstrate that the limits of the Ogallala Aquifer lie northeast of the WCS licensed site and that there is no drinking water beneath the site.

Economic Impact

The economic investment and contributions have been significant for Andrews County. (The following numbers are updated at the end of the state's fiscal year, which runs from Sept. 1 to Aug. 31. The current numbers are as of July 2024.)

- WCS has made over \$300 million in fixed-asset investments in Andrews County.
- WCS currently employs 110 individuals at its Andrews, TX site. The annual payroll at the site is over \$15 million (approximately \$280 million to date).
- The Texas Compact facility began operations in mid-2012; the Federal facility came online in mid-2013. Andrews County receives 5% percent of gross receipts for disposal activities and the State of Texas receives 26.25% of disposal gross receipts.
- WCS has paid approximately \$15.5 million in fee revenues to Andrews County since 2012.
- WCS has paid approximately \$68.3 million of disposal fees to the State of Texas since 2012.
- WCS invests over \$100,000 annually in community and charitable endeavors.

Transportation

- WCS has commissioned three Type B cask systems (WCS-160 Super A/B) in addition to two type A casks (ATS-215) for the transportation of LLRW.
- WCS receives shipments via truck and rail. Barge/rail transport is also possible through the Port of Houston.
- There has never been a case of citizens being exposed to radioactive material while in transit to WCS' state-owned facility.
- Transportation of radioactive waste is highly regulated and is overseen by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and U.S. Department of Transportation.
- Casks containing radioactive materials must be designed to withstand severe impact, exposure to heat, and puncture.
- WCS has continuously supported legislation that has:
 - Increased the notice to the Department of Public Safety of planned and active LLRW transports in Texas;
 - Repurposed fees generated from disposal operations at WCS to help train local first responders how to handle potential LLRW incidents;
 - Strengthened existing statutes concerning the transportation of LLRW and Hazardous Waste in the State of Texas.