

Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order

safety ❖ performance ❖ cleanup ❖ closure



From 1951 to 1992, the Nevada National Security Site was the location of hundreds of nuclear tests and related support operations. These activities resulted in some contamination at the site, located 65 miles northwest of Las Vegas. Today, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Environmental Management (EM) Nevada Program is tasked with addressing the contaminated sites on the Nevada National Security Site and the Nevada Test and Training Range, which includes the Tonopah Test Range. The EM Nevada Program is committed to responsibly remediating and/or managing these sites through investigations and corrective actions that are protective of public health and the environment.

What is being done about cleaning up these areas? How are contaminated sites prioritized? How are different kinds of contamination categorized? How are these corrective actions overseen and enforced? These questions have been addressed by the Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order (FFACO or Agreement).

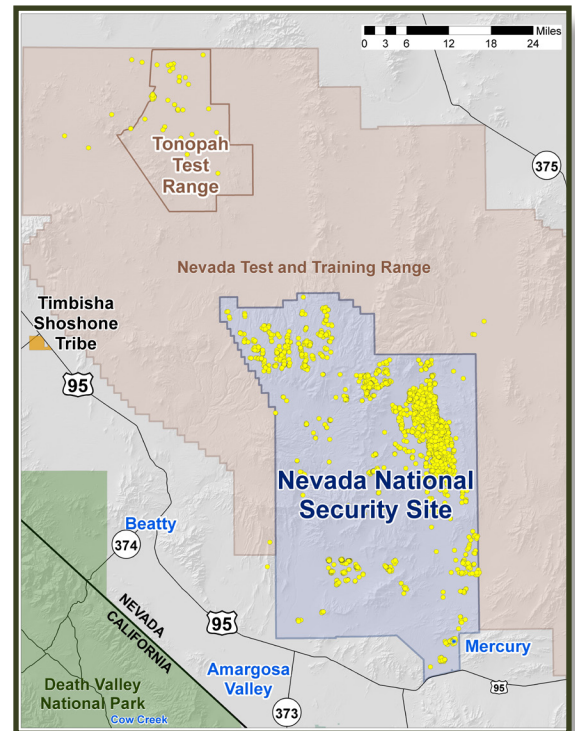
The Agreement outlines a schedule of cleanup and monitoring commitments for sites contaminated by historic nuclear testing activities conducted by DOE and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) in Nevada. The Agreement ensures these government entities work together to authorize cost-effective corrective actions in the state. It also establishes a framework for identifying, prioritizing, investigating, remediating, and monitoring contaminated sites.

What does the Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order Do?

The Agreement outlines a schedule of cleanup and monitoring commitments that:

- Formalizes relationships among the State of Nevada, DOE, and the DoD
- Identifies sites of potential historic contamination and prioritizes them for cleanup
- Defines the regulations the State of Nevada will use to direct and enforce corrective action activities
- Establishes a corrective action strategy for cleanup activities; and
- Provides public involvement opportunities

The FFACO, with its six appendices, is a legally binding document that also satisfies the corrective action requirements of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), a federal law that must be followed for managing hazardous materials from generation to disposal.



Yellow dots indicate sites identified in the FFACO

Definitions

Corrective Action Site: A site that has been identified as potentially needing remediation.

Corrective Action Unit: A grouping of Corrective Action Sites that are similar in remediation technique, type of contaminants, proximity to each other, or other important factors.

Nevada Site Specific Advisory Board: A group of volunteers who represent Nevada stakeholders by reviewing and commenting on environmental management activities.

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The Corrective Action Strategy

The Agreement's Appendix VI, Corrective Action Strategy, outlines the approach for identifying, prioritizing, investigating, and remediating sites. A corrective action ranges from no action to clean closure (the removal of all contamination from a site). Corrective action sites are grouped into units having common contaminants, geology, location, or other factors. These groups, called Corrective Action Units, are prioritized based on potential risk to workers and the public, available technology, future land use, agency and stakeholder concerns, and other criteria.

Corrective Action Units are organized as follows:

- Underground Test Area consists of those sites where underground nuclear detonations have resulted, or might result, in impacts to the groundwater.
- Industrial Sites were used to support nuclear testing activities, either directly or indirectly. Industrial Sites may or may not have radioactive contamination.
- Soils Sites are those where atmospheric (aboveground) nuclear and near-surface tests have resulted in surface and/or shallow subsurface contamination.

Public Participation

Making sure the public receives information on environmental restoration activities is very important. The Agreement can be viewed online at www.nnss.gov/docs/doc_environmental/FFACO_Document.pdf.

There is also an interactive map available at <http://nnssremediation.dri.edu> that depicts information on FFACO sites. The Agreement and all appendices can also be viewed at public reading facilities located in Las Vegas and Carson City, Nevada:

Nuclear Testing Archives - 755 East Flamingo Road, Las Vegas, Nevada 89119

Nevada State Library & Archives - 100 North Stewart Street, Carson City, Nevada 89701

A number of documents are associated with the corrective action process, including investigation plans, work plans, decision documents, corrective action plans, and closure reports. The supporting documentation for each site or corrective action unit is submitted to the State for approval, and a public notice is posted to the Nevada Field Office web site at www.nnss.gov/pages/PublicAffairsOutreach/PublicNotices.html. Upon receiving approval from the State, the final documents are submitted to the public reading facilities.

Other public involvement opportunities include attending Nevada Site Specific Advisory Board meetings (www.nnss.gov/NSSAB), subscribing to NNSS news (<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDOEOEM/subscribers/new>), and requesting a speaker for presentations to community organizations. Contact us for more information.



Cleanup of a plutonium dispersion site in Area 3 of the NNSS is accomplished in accordance with the FFACO