
Appendix A. Glossary

This glossary contains selected words and phrases used in this report that may not be familiar to the reader. Words appearing in *italic* type within a definition are also defined in this glossary.

A

absorbed dose – Energy absorbed per unit mass from any kind of ionizing *radiation* in any kind of matter. Units: *rad*, which is equal to the absorption of 100 ergs per gram of material irradiated or *gray*, the International System of Units (SI) equivalent (1 *gray* = 100 *rad*).

activation product – Material made radioactive by *exposure* to *radiation*, principally by neutron radiation as in metals in a nuclear reactor (e.g., cobalt-60 from cobalt-59 in stainless steel).

adsorption – The accumulation of gases, liquids, or solutes on the surface of a solid or liquid.

alpha particle – A positively charged particle composed of two protons and two neutrons ejected spontaneously from the nuclei of some *radionuclide*. It has low penetrating power and short range; the most energetic alpha will generally fail to penetrate the skin. Alpha particles are hazardous when an alpha-emitting *isotope* is introduced into the body.

anion – A negatively charged ion.

apatite – A mineral that has the capability to capture and retain radioactive metal contaminants.

aquifer – Underground sediment or rock that stores and/or transmits water.

aquifer tube – A small diameter flexible plastic tube used to sample shallow *aquifers*, natural seepage areas, or springs.

B

background radiation – *Radiation* in the natural environment, including cosmic rays from space and *radiation* from naturally occurring radioactive elements in the air, earth, and human bodies. It also includes *radiation* from worldwide *fallout* from historical atmospheric nuclear weapons testing. In the United States, the average person receives approximately 310 *millirem* of background radiation per year.

bank storage – Hydrologic term that describes river water that flows into and is retained in permeable stream banks during periods of high river stage. Flow is reversed during periods of low river stage.

becquerel (Bq) – Unit of activity or amount of a radioactive substance (also *radioactivity*) equal to one nuclear transformation per second (1 Bq = 1 disintegration per second). Another unit of *radioactivity*, the *curie*, is related to the becquerel: 1 Ci = 3.7×10^{10} Bq.

beta particle – A negatively charged particle (essentially an electron) emitted from the nucleus of an atom during radioactive *decay*. Large amounts of beta particles may cause skin burns and are harmful if they enter the body. Beta particles are easily stopped by a thin sheet of metal or plastic.

biological half-life – Time required for one-half of the amount of a *radionuclide* to be expelled from the body by natural metabolic processes, excluding radioactive *decay*, following ingestion, inhalation, or absorption.

biota concentration guide (BCG) – is the limiting concentration of a radionuclide in soil, sediment, or water that would not cause dose limits for protection of populations of aquatic and terrestrial biota to be exceeded.

black cell – A section of the Hanford Tank Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant where high-level nuclear waste will be routed that will never be accessible to humans because of high *radiation* levels associated with waste for treatment or residuals which cannot be removed.

C

cation – A positively charged ion.

clean closed – A facility is classified as “clean closed” under *Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976* regulations when all hazardous waste has been removed and *any remaining hazardous waste constituents do not exceed applicable cleanup levels*.

collective total effective dose equivalent (also referred to as “collective dose”) – Sum of the *total effective dose* for individuals comprising a defined population. Collective dose is expressed in units of *person-rem* or *-sievert*.

committed dose equivalent – The *dose equivalent* to organs or tissues that will be received from an intake of radioactive material by an individual during the 50-year period following intake.

committed effective dose equivalent – The sum of the *committed dose equivalent* to various tissues in the body, each multiplied by the appropriate weighting factor.

composite sample – Sample formed by mixing discrete samples taken at different times or from different locations.

confined aquifer – An *aquifer* bounded above and below by less-permeable layers. *Groundwater* in the confined aquifer is under a pressure greater than atmospheric pressure.

continuous sample – Sample formed by the continuous collection of the medium or contaminants within the medium during the entire sampling period.

cosmic radiation – High-energy subatomic particles and electromagnetic *radiation* from outer space that bombard the earth. Cosmic radiation is part of natural *background radiation*.

crib – An underground structure designed to receive liquid waste that percolates into the soil directly or after having traveled through a connected tile field. These structures are no longer used at the Hanford Site.

curie (Ci) – A unit of *radioactivity* equal to 37 billion (3.7×10^{10}) nuclear transformations per second (*becquerels*).

D

decay – The decrease in the amount of any radioactive material (disintegration) with the passage of time. See *radioactivity*.

decay product – The atomic nucleus or nuclei that are left after radioactive transformation of a radioactive material. Decay products may be radioactive or non-radioactive (stable) and are informally referred to as daughter products. See *radioactivity*.

deep-dose equivalent – The *dose equivalent* at a tissue depth of 1 centimeter from *radiation* originating outside of the body.

derived concentration standard (DCS) – Concentration of a *radionuclide* in either water or air that results in a member of the public receiving 1 millisievert (mSv) (100 millirem (mrem)) effective dose following continuous exposure for one year for each of the following pathways: ingestion of water, submersion in air, and inhalation.

desiccation – A process whereby water or moisture is removed, resulting in dryness.

detection level (or limit) – Minimum amount of a substance that can be measured with a specified or implied confidence that the analytical result is greater than a specific value (e.g., zero).

direct-push technology – A cost-effective means of collecting subsurface samples; this technology uses a hydraulic hammer to drive a hollow rod into the soil either vertically or at an angle. Sensors can be deployed within the rod to detect radioactive contaminants, soil moisture, and other sampling criteria.

dispersion – Process whereby *effluent* or *emissions* are spread or mixed when they are transported by *groundwater*, surface water, or air.

dose equivalent – Product of the *absorbed dose*, a quality factor, and any other modifying factors. The dose equivalent is a quantity for comparing the biological effectiveness of different kinds of *radiation* on a common scale. The unit of dose equivalent is the *rem*.

dose limits (regulatory) – Public and occupational regulatory dose limits are set by federal (i.e., U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and U.S. Department of

Energy) and state agencies to limit cancer risk. Other radiation dose limits are applied to limit other potential biological effects with workers' skin and lens of the eye.

dose rate – The rate at which a dose is delivered over time (e.g., *dose equivalent* rate in *millirem* per hour [mrem/hr]).

dosimeter – Device for measuring the accumulated *exposure* or *absorbed dose* from specific types or energies of ionizing *radiation* fields.

E

effective dose (equivalent) – The sum of products of *dose equivalent* to selected tissues of the body and appropriate tissue weighting factors. The tissue weighting factors put doses to various tissues and organs on an equal basis in terms of health *risk*.

effluent – Liquid stream released from a facility.

emission – Gaseous stream released from a facility.

emission/effluent monitoring – Sampling or measuring specific streams for the presence of pollutants.

exposure – The interaction of an organism with a physical agent (e.g., *radiation*) or a chemical agent (e.g., arsenic) of interest. Also used as a term for quantifying x- and *gamma-radiation* fields. See *roentgen*.

external radiation – *Radiation* originating from a source outside the body.

F

fallout – Typically refers to radioactive materials that are released into the earth's atmosphere following a nuclear explosion or atmospheric release and that eventually fall to earth.

field duplicate sample – Replicate sample to determine the precision of the sampling and analytical measurement process by comparing results from identical samples collected at the same time and location. Field duplicates are stored in separate containers and are analyzed independently by the same laboratory.

fission – For nuclides, splitting or breaking apart of a nucleus into at least two other nuclei, accompanied with a release of a relatively large amount of energy.

fission products – *Nuclides* formed from fissioning. Many fission products are radioactive.

found fuel – Incomplete pieces of spent nuclear fuel elements too small to have been located and removed during previous debris removal.

fully institutionalized – To incorporate into a formalized, structured system and be implemented and fully functional.

G

gamma radiation – High-energy electromagnetic *radiation (photons)* originating from decaying *radionuclides*. Gamma radiation is substantially more penetrating than *alpha* or *beta particles*.

grab sample – A short-duration sample (e.g., air, water, and soil) that is grabbed from the collection site.

ground truth – Direct physical observations that are used to test indirect interpretations.

groundwater – Subsurface water that is in the pores of sand and gravel or in the cracks of fractured rock.

gray (Gy) – Unit of *absorbed dose* in the International System of Units (SI) equal to the absorption of 1 joule per kilogram. The common unit of *absorbed dose*, the *rad*, is equal to 0.01 Gy.

H

half-life – Length of time in which a radioactive substance will lose one half of its *radioactivity by decay*. Half-lives range from a fraction of a second to billions of years, and each *radionuclide* has a unique half-life.

high-activity waste – See *high-level waste*.

high-level waste – Highly radioactive waste material resulting from reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel, including liquid waste produced directly in reprocessing and any solid material derived from such liquid waste that contains *fission products* in sufficient concentrations; and other highly radioactive material that is determined, consistent with existing law, to require permanent isolation.

I

institutional controls – Long-term actions or restrictions including *monitoring*, periodic sampling, access controls, and land-use restrictions designed to mitigate any *risks* posed by contamination following *remediation*. Institutional controls alone may be sufficient to reduce *risks* posed by low levels of contamination.

internal radiation – *Radiation* from radioactive material inside the body.

ion exchange – The reversible exchange of one species of ion for a different species of ion within a medium.

ion exchange resin – High molecular weight insoluble polymers containing functional groups capable of undergoing exchange reactions with ions in a solution with which it is in contact. (Note: Ion exchange “resin” is frequently applied to inorganic materials [e.g., aluminosilicates and zeolites], which also exhibit ion exchange properties.)

irradiation – *Exposure to radiation.*

isotopes – *Nuclides* of the same chemical element with the same number of protons but a differing number of neutrons.

isotopic plutonium – Any of two or more atoms of the chemical element *plutonium* with the same atomic number and position in the periodic table and nearly identical chemical behavior but with differing atomic mass number due to number of neutrons and different physical properties. Plutonium isotopes are man-made, produced in nuclear reactions (e.g., plutonium-239 is produced by neutron absorption by uranium-238).

isotopic uranium – Any of two or more atoms of the chemical element uranium with the same atomic number and position in the periodic table and nearly identical chemical behavior but with differing atomic mass number due to the number of neutrons and different physical properties. Uranium exists naturally as a mixture of three *isotopes* of mass 234, 235, and 238 in the proportions of 0.006%, 0.71%, and 99.27%, respectively.

L

legacy waste – Waste that was generated before the Hanford Site’s nuclear materials production mission was terminated.

low-activity waste – Radioactive waste with low concentrations of radioactivity.

low-level waste – Nuclear waste that does not fit into the categorical definitions for high-level waste, spent nuclear fuel, transuranic waste, or certain byproduct materials such as uranium or thorium mill tailings.

M

material at risk – The inventory of radioactive material that could potentially be released to the environment from an accident.

maximally exposed individual – A hypothetical member of the public residing near the Hanford Site who, by virtue of location and living habits, would reasonably receive the highest possible *radiation* dose from materials originating from the site.

mean (or average) – Average value of a series of measurements. The mean is computed using the following equation:

$$\text{mean} = \frac{\sum x}{n}$$

where n is the number of measurements, and $\sum x$ is the sum of all measurements.

median – Middle value in an odd-numbered set of results when the data are ranked in increasing or decreasing order or the *average* of two central values in an even number set of results.

millirem – A unit of *radiation dose equivalent* that is equal to one one-thousandth (1/1000) of a *rem*.

minimum detectable activity or concentration – Smallest amount or concentration of a chemical or radioactive material that can be reliably detected in a sample.

mitigation – Prevention or reduction of expected *risks* to workers, the public, or the environment.

mixed waste – A U.S. Environmental Protection Agency- or state-designated dangerous or extremely or acutely hazardous waste that contains both a nonradioactive hazardous component and a radioactive component.

monitoring – As defined in DOE O 458.1, Chg 3, the measurement of radiation levels, discharges or environmental releases, residual radioactive levels, quantities of radioactive material, or exposure to members of the public and the use of these measurement results to evaluate radiological discharges or releases or potential and actual dose resulting from exposures to radioactive material or radiation.

N

noble gas – Any of a group of chemically and biologically inert gases that includes argon, krypton, radon, and xenon. These gases are not retained in the body following inhalation. The principal *exposure* pathway for radioactive noble gases is direct external dose from the surrounding air.

nuclide – A particular combination of neutrons and protons. A *radionuclide* is a radioactive nuclide.

O

offsite locations – Sampling and measurement locations outside the Hanford Site boundary.

onsite locations – Sampling and measurement locations within the Hanford Site boundary.

operable unit – A discrete area for which an incremental step can be taken toward comprehensively addressing site problems. The cleanup of a site can be divided into a number of operable units depending on the complexity of problems associated with the site.

outfall – End of a drain or pipe that discharges wastewater or other *effluent* to the environment (e.g., ditch, pond, or river).

P

person-rem or person-sievert (person-Sv) – Unit of *collective total effective dose (equivalent)*.
1 person-Sv = 100 person-rem.

photon – A quantum of radiant energy. *Gamma radiation* and x-radiation (x-rays) are both composed of photons of varying energy.

phytoremediation – Use of plants to degrade or immobilize pollutants or toxins from the environment.

plume – The cloud of a pollutant in air, surface water, or *groundwater* formed after the pollutant is released from a source.

plutonium – A heavy, radioactive, metallic element consisting of several *isotopes*. One important *isotope* is plutonium-239, which is produced by the *irradiation* of uranium-238. Routine analysis cannot distinguish between the plutonium-239 and plutonium-240 *isotopes*; hence, the term plutonium-239/240 as used in this report is symbolic of the presence of both of these *isotopes* in the analytical results.

primordial radionuclide – A radioactive material in the earth's crust that has a very long *half-life* and has existed since the beginning of the planet.

Q

quality assurance – All actions that provide confidence that an item or process meets or exceeds user requirements and expectations.

quality control – All actions necessary to control and verify the features and characteristics of a material, process, product, or service to specified requirements. Quality control is an element of *quality assurance*.

R

rad – The unit of *absorbed dose*. 1 rad = 0.01 gray (Gy).

radiation – The energy emitted in the form of *photons* or particles (e.g., *alpha* and *beta particles*) such as that from transforming *radionuclides*. For this report, radiation refers to ionizing types of radiation, not radiowaves, microwaves, radiant light, or other types of non-ionizing radiation.

radioactivity – Property possessed by *radioisotopes* emitting *radiation* (such as *alpha* or *beta particles* or high-energy *photons*) spontaneously in their *decay* process; also, the *radiation* emitted.

radioisotope – An unstable *isotope* of an element that *decays* or disintegrates spontaneously, emitting *radiation*.

radiologically controlled area – An area to which access is controlled to protect individuals from exposure to *radiation* or radioactive materials.

radionuclide – A species of atoms having a particular number of protons (Z), neutrons (A), and atomic weight (N = Z + A) that happens to emit *radiation*. Carbon-14 is a radionuclide, but carbon-12, which is not radioactive, is referred to simply as a *nuclide*.

recruitment – Survival from one life form or stage to the next or from one age class to the next.

redox – A chemical reaction involving oxidation and reduction.

refractory – A material that has a high melting point (i.e., heat resistant).

refugium (refugia) – An area that has not experienced ecological changes that have affected surrounding regions, providing a habitat for species that were once more widespread.

relative percent difference (RPD) – A measure of the precision of the measurement of a sample (S) and its duplicate (D). The formula is:

$$RPD = \left(\frac{|S - D|}{\left(\frac{S + D}{2} \right)} \right) \times 100$$

rem – A unit of dose equivalent and total effective dose (equivalent).

remediation – Reduction (or cleanup) of known *risks* to the public and environment to an agreed-upon level.

risk – The probability that a detrimental health effect will occur.

risk-based disposal approval – A written application intended to manage and dispose of *Toxic Substances Control Act*-regulated polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) waste not addressed suitably within the regulations. The risk-based disposal approval process applies to any person wishing to sample, clean up, or dispose of waste in a manner other than as prescribed in 40 CFR 761. For PCB *remediation* waste, the requirements for a risk-based disposal approval are specified in 40 CFR 761.61(c). Written approval from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is required before waste management activities are performed.

roentgen (R) – The unit of X-ray or gamma *photon exposure* as measured in air historically used to describe *external radiation* levels. An *exposure* of 1 roentgen typically causes an *effective dose* of 1 *rem*.

S

shrub-steppe – A drought-resistant shrub and grassland ecosystem.

sievert (Sv) – The unit of *dose equivalent* and its variants in the International System of Units (SI). The common unit for *dose equivalent* and its variants, the *rem*, is equal to 0.01 Sv.

special case waste – Waste for which there is an undetermined disposal path because of high levels of *radioactivity* and difficulties in characterization, classification, and packaging.

specific retention facilities – Historical structures consisting of *cribs*, ditches, trenches, or holes in the ground that received relatively small volumes of high concentration liquid radioactive waste. The small volume of liquid waste was designed to prevent flushing of the contaminants through the soil column to the *groundwater*.

spent nuclear fuel – Uranium metal or oxide and its metal container that have been used to power a nuclear reactor and for one reason or another has reached the end of its useful life. It is highly radioactive and typically contains *fission products*, *plutonium*, and residual uranium.

standard deviation – A measure of the dispersion of sample values from a population. If the data are from a normal or bell-shaped statistical distribution then about 68% of the values are within one standard deviation of the mean and about 95% of the values are within two standard deviations of the mean.

standard error of the mean – A measure of the precision of a *mean* of observed values; that is, an estimate of how close a *mean* of observed values is expected to be to the true *mean*.

surveillance – As defined in DOE O 458.1, Chg 3, the collection and analysis of samples of air, water, soil, foodstuffs, biota, and other media, and the measurement of *external radiation* for purposes of demonstrating compliance with applicable standards, assessing *exposures* to the public, and determining effects, if any, on the local environment.

T

tank farm – A group of underground storage tanks used to hold wastes from nuclear fuel reprocessing activities at the Hanford Site.

thermoluminescent dosimeter – A device containing a material that, after being exposed to beta and/or *gamma radiation*, emits light when heated. The amount of light emitted is proportional to the *absorbed dose* to the thermoluminescent dosimeter.

total effective dose (equivalent) – The sum of *committed effective dose equivalent* from the intake of radioactive material and dose equivalent from *exposure to external radiation*. Unit: *rem* or *sievert*.

total uranium – The sum of concentrations of the *isotopes* uranium-234, uranium-235, and uranium-238 or concentrations determined using chemical analytical techniques .

transuranic element – An element with an atomic number greater than 92, the atomic number of uranium.

transuranic waste – Waste containing more than 100 nanocuries (10^{-9} curies) per gram of alpha-emitting transuranic *isotopes* (*half-lives* greater than 20 years).

tritium – The heaviest radioactive *isotope* of hydrogen (hydrogen-3) with a 12.3-year half-life.

U

unconfined aquifer – An *aquifer* containing groundwater that is not confined above by relatively impermeable rocks. The pressure at the top of the unconfined aquifer is equal to that of the atmosphere. At the Hanford Site, the unconfined *aquifer* is the uppermost aquifer and is most susceptible to contamination from site operations.

V

vadose zone – Underground area from the ground surface to the top of the *water table* or *aquifer*.

volatile organic compounds – Lightweight organic compounds that vaporize easily; used in solvents and degreasing compounds as raw materials.

W

water table – The top of the *unconfined aquifer*.

wind rose – A diagram showing how often winds of various speeds blow from different directions, usually based on yearly averages.

References

- 40 CFR 761. “Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) Manufacturing, Processing, Distribution in Commerce, and Use Prohibitions.” *Code of Federal Regulations*, as amended. Online at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/title40/40cfr761_main_02.tpl.

DOE O 458.1, Chg. 3. 2013. *Radiation Protection of the Public and the Environment*. U.S. Department of Energy, The Office of Environment, Safety and Health, Washington, D.C. Online at <https://www.directives.doe.gov/directives-documents/400-series/0458-1-border-admc3>.

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, 42 U.S.C. 6901, et seq. Online at <https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-resource-conservation-and-recovery-act>.

Toxic Substances Control Act. 1976. Public Law 94-469, as amended, 15 U.S.C. 2601 et seq. Online at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-90/pdf/STATUTE-90-Pg2003.pdf>.