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Workers replace lifting equipment at WVDP for future demolition activities

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WEST VALLEY — A Facility Disposition crew at EM's West Valley Demonstration Project replaced the hoist in the Equipment Decontamination Room during essential mission-critical operations.

This was the first work activity that involved both COVID-19 protocols and radiological personal protective equipment and is associated with the future demolition of the Main Plant Process Building — an EM2020 Priority.

The site is currently in Phase 2 of its Work Resumption Plan.

“This is a good example of what can be accomplished when issues are discussed and ideas are shared,” said Dale Macklem. “Open communication allows employees and supervisors to be more engaged, and understand that what they do matters in our future success.”

Employees openly discussed their questions and concerns with supervisors and senior staff in a collaborative and inclusive manner that resulted in an agreed upon approach in donning and doffing personal protective equipment (PPE) safely for this particular work activity. Lessons learned from this work activity, which combined COVID-19 protocols and protection, along with work-related PPE, will be applied to future cleanup work at the site.

DOE WVDP Safety and Site Programs Team Leader Jennifer Dundas, commended the team for their pre-job briefing and work.

“Encouraging employees to speak freely when confronting an issue or challenge is the best way to solve a problem,” Dundas said. “It fosters the sharing of ideas and allows everyone an opportunity to be part of the solution. In the end, their agreed upon solution helped them to safely complete this work activity.”

Creating an open environment helps an organization improve job satisfaction, reduces stress, and increase mutual respect throughout the organization with the outcome of creating a more productive work environment and a positive workplace.

After donning PPE and adhering to COVID-19 protocols, the crew successfully installed the new hoist in the EDR. The important lessons learned from this work activity were refocusing on safety, being aware of changing conditions and new protocols, and getting reacquainted with procedures, work packages, radiation work permits, etc.

The new hoist will be used to move an aerial lift into the Chemical Process Cell, and move boxes and drums filled with General Purpose Cell waste.