

Oyster Creek and Pilgrim: New Year, Same Focus on Safety and Excellence

With 2021 now well underway, decommissioning activities at the Oyster Creek and Pilgrim decommissioning sites continue to progress, a testament to the strong focus on safety, precision and innovation at both locations.

"A commitment to safety and excellence underlies our decommissioning progress at both sites. When we work with safety and excellence as our number one goals, our tasks are completed efficiently and expertly," said Pam Cowan, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for Holtec Decommissioning International. "The foundational principles of our fleet management model and continuous learning are what allow us to move forward in decommissioning and achieve industry-leading results."

Fuel Moves Underway

Oyster Creek's campaign to move all of its used fuel assemblies from the spent fuel pool to the Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI) has reached its stride.

Currently, crews are moving the ninth of 33 Multi-Purpose Canisters (MPCs) to the ISFSI. With each move, the team carefully reviews the "pool to pad" activity, learns lessons and gleans best practices. Each of these safety measures will be incorporated into future fuel campaigns.

Moving fuel assemblies from the spent fuel pool into the MPC and ultimately into the HI-STORM FW Version E on the ISFSI is a very structured, deliberate process, involving a diverse team of experts who meticulously follow loading procedures.

In brief, the team begins by prepping the MPC prior to its placement into the HI-TRAC Transfer Cask. The HI-TRAC inner shell, which contains the MPC, is lowered into the spent fuel pool, is filled with the assemblies and a lid is installed.



Technicians Lift the HI-TRAC Inner-Shell From the Spent Fuel Pool at Oyster Creek Decommissioning Site



HI-TRAC Transfer Cask Inner-Shell Being Installed Into the Neutron Shield Cylinder and Bolted Into One Assembly

A thorough process of draining, drying, backfilling with an inert gas and performing a strength welded closure of the canister takes place over a few days before the HI-TRAC is safely moved outside and placed on top of the HI-STORM FW overpack that is waiting in the Cask Transfer Pit (CTP). Following lowering the MPC from the HI-TRAC into the HI-STORM FW overpack, the HI-STORM lid is then installed and the system is lifted out of the CTP and moved onto the ISFSI pad.

The Oyster Creek ISFSI team plans to begin moving at least two casks each week, which will mean completion of the campaign in mid to late summer.



HI-TRAC Transfer Cask is Placed on Top of the HI-STORM FW Overpack That is Inside the Cask Transfer Pit at Oyster Creek



Vertical Cask Transporter (VCT) Moving a HI-STORM FW to the Oyster Creek ISFSI Pad

Pilgrim Safely Begins Reactor Vessel Segmentation; Waste Ships to Texas Facility

Vessel segmentation has been the main focus at Pilgrim since December. Following the segmentation of the 54,000-pound Steam Dryer, the team moved on to the 96,000-pound Steam Separator. The work is underway in the Dryer-Separator pit.

Once the Separator work is complete, segmentation of the Top Guide, which is unlatched and prepped for cutting, will commence.

During segmentation, large components are removed, cut up using innovative equipment and then sealed in robust waste containers. It is then safely transported to a disposal facility in West Texas that stores much of the low-level radioactive waste from the nation's nuclear facilities.



Segmentation of Reactor Vessel Internals at Pilgrim

Pilgrim reached a milestone on January 14 when the first shipment of waste from the reactor vessel internal segmentation was containerized and safely shipped for disposal.



Waste is Placed in Robust Waste Containers and Transported to a Disposal Facility

Segmentation work at Oyster Creek began in early 2020 and then paused so that the fuel moves could begin. Now that the ISFSI project is well underway, segmentation can resume with both projects working in tandem.