



Cleanup

Cold spray Tank refurbishment system

Orano has been supporting the Hanford tank waste mission for over a decade and continues to do so with the cold spray tank refurbishment system.

Double-shell tanks (DSTs) are a critical part of the Hanford tank waste mission as they offer the only environmentally compliant storage space for waste. The tanks will be required to remain in operation for several decades, well beyond their original designed operating life.

Project objective

Support the development of a cold spray refurbishment system applicable to the Hanford site that will:

- Build back material thickness at locations thinned by corrosion degradation
- Utilize cold spray process parameters, characterizations, and surface preparations parameters using commercially available equipment

Phase I

In 2021 Orano received a contract from Washington River Protection Solutions (WRPS) to support the development of a cold spray application repair system for the underground waste storage tanks at the Hanford site. Ensuring the integrity of these tanks is a top priority for WRPS, DOE, and Washington State Department of Ecology for the safety of the Hanford site workforce, the public, and the environment.

Our successful cold spray demonstration is the outcome of several years of research and strong partnerships with industry leaders such as VRC Metals, Robotic Technologies of Tennessee, and Orano.

Alex Pappas
Chief Technology Scientist
WRPS

WRPS has a tank integrity program that includes researching, testing and implementation of new technology to refurbish aging tanks. Areas of thinning walls in DSTs are a concern identified by WRPS. The cold spray refurbishment method is a technology that has the potential to address this concern.

Cold spray is a coating process where metal powders are deposited on a surface at supersonic speed and adhere to the surface. Cold spray has the ability to perform metal-to-metal solutions for increasing the thickness of a DST wall. Commercial



The Orano team performing a cold spray demonstration at Hanford's Cold Test Facility

Orano Cold spray

applications of cold spray technology allow the use of mild steel, stainless steel, or other metal blends for surface refurbishment.

Orano led a team comprised of VRC Metal Systems and Robotic Technologies of Tennessee (RTT) to demonstrate the cold spray technology at the Hanford Cold Test Facility (CTF). Testing by the team included mild-steel powder performance relative to adhesion, sealing, and corrosion resistance on a mockup tank at the Hanford site.

With completion of the field demonstration test, the cold spray team identified additional testing and optimization opportunities, as well as lessons learned, that need to be completed prior to deployment in a DST. Results from these demonstrations will be used to make decisions on the path forward for tank refurbishment.



Cold spray robot with pre-demo test coupon

Phase II

The Cold Spray Phase II project is ongoing through fiscal year 2023. During Phase II, the Orano team integrates regularly with WRPS. Continuing development from the first phase of this project, the team has a two-step process to reach the overall goal of developing, demonstrating and deploying this technology for tank refurbishment.

Step 1

The first step is to optimize each component of the cold spray system, including the development of a tank access strategy for the robotic crawler and evaluation of the cold spray coating properties using various material combinations. Additional attributes being evaluated in this early step include:

- Robotic system performance optimization
- Additional tool attachments to the robotic platform
- Optimization of cold spray deposition characteristics
- Process cost optimization
- Coating equipment modification for tank access

Step 2

Once each component has been optimized, the systems will be combined and evaluated in mockup environments. This step will utilize actual equipment that would be deployed for full-scale demonstration at the customer's facility in the future.

The process will involve:

- Combining miniaturized cold spray equipment and robotic system and testing functionality
- Mockup evaluation at VRC headquarters for cold spray robot validation
- Mockup evaluation at RTT headquarters for robotic system evaluation on a simulated tank annulus section mockup

Orano consults with WRPS to establish physical specifications to ensure the mockup trials are as relevant as possible. The first tank deployment demonstration at the CTF was completed in November 2022. The Orano team will return to the CTF in the spring of 2023 to demonstrate lessons learned and perform in a simulated field deployment environment, including crawler, umbilical, hose management, and cold spray equipment. Following the demonstration at the CTF, deployment in an actual Hanford tank annulus is expected to occur.

