

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 5, 2021

TO: Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director
FROM: Timothy L. Hunt, Cognizant Engineer
SUBJECT: Idaho National Laboratory (INL) Report for January 2021

DNFSB Staff Activity: No staff members were on site during January 2021.

COVID-19 Update. INL entered Phase 2 of its Reconstitution Plan on June 3, 2020, and continued in Phase 2 throughout January 2021. The state of Idaho returned to Stage 3 of the Idaho Rebounds plan on January 29, 2021, due to improving pandemic conditions statewide.

Operator at Accelerated Retrieval Project (ARP) Performed Duties With Expired Qualification. On January 19, 2021, an operator performed cold weather rounds at the ARP facilities with an expired hoisting and rigging qualification. The Qualified Watchstanders List (QWL), used to determine qualification status, did not clearly flag the expired qualification. The QWL indicates a qualification has expired, but has not exceeded its grace period, if flagged in red. If the grace period is exceeded, the red flag disappears and the space for the “Expired date” is left blank. In this particular case, the grace period was three months and the qualification had expired about six months prior. The supervisor reviewing the QWL wrongfully assumed that the absence of a red flag indicated the operator was qualified. The operator and training personnel were both aware that the qualification had expired and had made several attempts to reschedule the class to complete the requalification process. Due to the COVID-19 quarantine, the operator was not able to attend any of the rescheduled hoisting and rigging classes. The operator had not performed any hoisting and rigging duties since the qualification expired.

Equipment Damage During Rigging Evolution at the Integrated Waste Treatment Unit (IWTU). On January 19, 2021, a section of a valve stem broke off when maintenance personnel removed the product receiver filter (PRF) product pump vent valve assembly. Due to the overall size of the valve assembly, roughly ten feet long and 400 pounds, the removal activities were required to be done in accordance with general hoisting and rigging requirements. Workers noted a popping sound as the valve assembly transitioned from vertical to horizontal when laid on the deck. Fluor Idaho engineering is completing an evaluation to determine the reason the valve stem broke. A similar valve in the PRF system will have its valve stem examined for fatigue failure indications.

Improper Lockout/Tagout (LO/TO) Installation at IWTU. On January 29, 2021, IWTU personnel incorrectly performed installation of a LO/TO at IWTU. Operations personnel installed a lock and tag on a breaker in a lighting panel adjacent to the correct breaker. The correct breaker, by chance, was in the open (off) position, thus, the zero energy checks were satisfactory. The verifier and the work group acceptance walkdown portions of the LO/TO process did not identify that the wrong breaker had been locked and tagged. Two other operators identified the issue when they recognized that something was amiss with the amount of area lighting in contrast to what the LO/TO should have affected. The operators and shift supervisor confirmed that the LO/TO for breaker 42/44 was hung instead on breaker 41/43 and pulled the LO/TO, preventing authorized work from occurring without proper controls in place.