

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 14, 2023

TO: Timothy J. Dwyer, Acting Technical Director
FROM: A.Z. Kline, L. Lin, Z.C. McCabe, and E.P. Richardson, Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Savannah River Site Activity Report for Week Ending July 14, 2023

Staff Activity: Members of the Board's staff R. Eul and S. Seprish were onsite to conduct a review on the implementation of aging infrastructure management programs. The staff team discussed lines of inquiry with federal and contractor staff and conducted walkdowns at the Tritium facilities, Tank Farms, H-Canyon, Defense Waste Processing Facility, and K-Area Complex.

DOE Operational Awareness Assessments: The resident inspectors (RIs) are conducting a focused review on DOE-SR Facility Representative (FR) assessment of nuclear facilities to determine the quality of federal oversight that is being provided through operational awareness activities and how those assessments impact feedback provided by DOE-SR to their contractors. The RIs reviewed DOE-SR's procedures implementing DOE Order 226.1, *Implementation of the Department of Energy Oversight Policy*; DOE Order 1063, *Facility Representatives*; and over a year's worth of FR assessments across all the nuclear facilities. The RI's review examines how the annual assessment plans are developed, the scope of the operational awareness activities, the quality of the assessments, what tracking and trending is conducted, and the review and approval of the assessments. DOE-SR procedures provide requirements, guidance, and structure for conducting assessments, identifying issues, and tracking and trending. However, these processes are not effectively implemented. The RIs determined that the program (as reviewed) overly relies on the individual FRs to determine what the appropriate scope is for assessments, what activities to cover, assessment documentation, and internal communication vice following the defined process. Further, DOE-SR management does not appear to analyze information from the process to identify trends to help determine best practices or areas for additional oversight activities. The RIs communicated these process issues, examples of less than adequate FR oversight in certain defense nuclear facilities, and examples of limited management engagement to DOE-SR senior management. DOE-SR senior management began conducting meetings with the different operational divisions to examine FR assessments and are taking actions to address the concerns raised by the RIs. The RIs are encouraged by the plans discussed by DOE-SR senior management and will continue to monitor the progress made by DOE.

Defense Waste Processing Facility: When exiting the railroad well after completing work, an employee alarmed an ARGOS personnel contamination monitor. Radiological protection responded and detected 100,000 disintegrations per minute (dpm)/100 cm² β/γ and <200 dpm/100 cm² α on the employee's shin. The employee was taken to the decontamination room, was successfully decontaminated, and returned to work. An issue investigation on the event is pending.