

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 2, 2007

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: R. Quirk and W. Linzau, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Activity Report for the Week Ending March 2, 2007

DOE Headquarters Oversight: Staff from Office of Environmental Management (EM) and the Office of the Chief of Nuclear Safety performed a review of several Richland Field Office facilities this week. The review was the first EM reviews of its type for DOE Order 226.1 and included oversight of conduct of operations, work planning, radiological controls, and control of hazardous energy. The team preliminarily identified nine findings, nine observations, and four strengths. The preliminary findings include procedure compliance problems at the Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP) and the failure to hold a post job review for a first-time performance of a procedure at the K Basin Closure Project (KBC). There were a few observations related to the impact of the around-the-clock recovery actions for the Hose-in-Hose transfer system problems at KBC. The detailed level of understanding and awareness of recovery activities by the facility representatives at the KBC was noted as a strength.

Fluor Hanford, Inc. (FHI) personnel briefed the review team on how they control the hazards to workers who perform maintenance on electrical circuits that have shared neutrals. Approximately 500 FHI electricians, engineers, and planners were recently trained on how to recognize and work with these circuits after a number of problems have recently been encountered with this type of circuit. FHI requires the installation of a tag-out on the power supply to the device being maintained. A representative from Washington Closure Hanford (WCH) was at the meeting and stated that they will implement similar training and practices in the near future. The CH2M Hill Hanford Group (CHG) approach is similar and requires the tag-out of all circuits associated with the shared neutrals prior to working on the circuit or the circuit must be considered energized.

K Basins Closure: The site rep met with the engineering manager for the KBC facilities to discuss the identified problems with the footing thickness in the Cold Vacuum Drying Facility (see Hanford Activity Report 2/9/07). The project is developing a draft calculation to verify that the footings have sufficient capacity to withstand the normal and seismic loads. As part of the Sludge Treatment Project, a hole will be cut through the wall between Bays two and three. The walls were fabricated as prestressed, tilt-up concrete slabs and it is unclear what the effects will be from cutting the steel in a prestressed slab.

Waste Treatment Plant: The site reps met with senior contractor management and discussed the plans to restart construction activities on the High Level Waste and Pretreatment facilities. The project is preparing a start-up review plan that considers items, such as assessments of partially completed work, training requirements for new employees, and ensuring the engineering work is far enough ahead of construction to prevent a false start.

Office of River Protection (ORP): ORP Manager R. Schepens retired this week and Deputy Manager S. Olinger is the Acting Manager.