

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

August 17, 2007

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: R. Quirk and W. Linzau, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Activity Report for the Week Ending August 17, 2007

Savannah River Site Rep J. Contardi was on site this week augmenting site rep coverage.

Range Fire: The Emergency Operation Center (EOC) was activated and an Alert level emergency was declared due to a range fire that burned 8,300 acres of the Hanford Site on August 16, 2007. The range fire started approximately eight miles west of the site around noon and strong winds pushed it onto the site late in the afternoon, but the fire never crossed the fences surrounding nuclear facilities. Fires on the site were brought under control by 9:00 PM, but the EOC remained manned until 2:00 PM on Friday when off-site fires were completely contained. Air samples revealed no indication of radiological release and there were no signs of elevated differential pressures due to soot loading on the inlet air filters for PFP and the 222-S Lab. The outside storage of fiberglass-reinforced, wooden waste storage boxes just inside the 200 West Area fence is being re-evaluated. A large fire occurred on government-owned land a few days earlier but never crossed onto the site because the wind was blowing to the west.

Tank Farms: The DOE Office of Health, Safety and Security initiated a Type A investigation of the events associated with the waste spill at S-102 tank (see Hanford Activity Report 7/27/07) and the DOE team will start its investigation on August 20, 2007.

The contractor continues with their investigation and plans to issue a report assuming the cause was a leak in the dilution hose because forensic inspection of the hose and pump box will require significant additional time. Lessons learned during the mockup training for recovering the suspect hose were incorporated into the draft workplan and additional practice with mockups are planned for next week before the work package is approved. Recovery actions from the spill are being closely coordinated with the Type A investigation team to ensure that evidence is not lost.

Waste Treatment Plant: In an August 9, 2007, letter, the Secretary of Energy certified to Congress his approval of the final seismic and ground motion criteria for the Pretreatment and High Level Waste Facilities (HLW). The Office of River Protection subsequently sent a letter to the contractor giving approval for resumption of construction of these facilities pending completion of a readiness review. The contractor has completed most of pre-start actions resulting from internal and corporate-level reviews (see Hanford Activity Report 5/25/07) and plan on declaring readiness to resume construction activities on HLW late next week.

Plutonium Finishing Plant: The site rep and staff observed the loading of 3013s in the DOT 9975 containers. These containers were the last of a batch of 100 containers that are being prepared in anticipation of a start of a de-inventory campaign. The workers demonstrated good procedural compliance and the required quality assurance inspections were performed. Although the ALARA work practices for the 3013s that were loaded during these observations appeared adequate, the staff questioned if work practices for future higher dose containers may require modification to minimize worker exposure.