

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 9, 2007

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: R. Quirk and W. Linzau, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Activity Report for the Week Ending November 9, 2007

Outside expert (OE) D. Boyd was on-site observing conduct of operations in the Tank Farms.

River Corridor Closure Project: DOE completed the Integrated Safety Management System (ISMS) Phase II Verification this week (see Hanford Activity Report 11/2/07). The verification team determined that the system description was effectively implemented but noted cases of lack of compliance with the established processes. The team identified four concerns, six noteworthy practices, and 27 opportunities for improvement. The final report is scheduled to be issued by the end of the month.

Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): The site rep observed weekend operations and questioned why the limitations in the applicable DOE-issued technical manual were not being followed. The work was done using a PFP-issued procedure that referenced the DOE manual for detailed instructions. An 18-month-old e-mail from the technical owner of the manual was used as a justification for not complying with a requirement in the manual. Richland Field Office and contractor personnel are investigating how to resolve this issue.

Tank Farms: The site rep and the OE conducted focused reviews of conduct of operations and noted a number of issues. A work activity of calibrating three safety-related instruments was halted when the facility representative and the OE arrived because the workers did not have the procedure in their possession. The tank waste level instruments provide a Technical Safety Requirement (TSR) function and the work procedure is required to be present and followed step-by-step. Before work was stopped by contractor management, calibration of one of the three instruments had been completed without the procedure. Other issues noted were workers' inconsistent use of three-way communications, inadequate labeling of components in the field, and problems responding to intermittent alarms. The site rep and the OE also noted inadequate work planning resulting in work delays that prevented observation of other planned field work.

Radiochemical Processing Laboratory (RPL), Building 325: The site rep met with contractor management to discuss observations made during a fact-finding meeting last week (see Hanford Activity Report 11/2/07). The contractor is formulating corrective actions related to emergency response and management expectations of how fact-findings are conducted. The management also noted their ongoing effort to better integrate personnel doing research and development with the facility and operations personnel that are responsible for implementing safety requirements.

Solid Waste and Disposal Project: A TSR violation was declared due to the failure to comply with the Hoisting and Rigging Manual. Compliance with the manual is required by an Administrative Control element. The manual requires annual inspections of forklift trucks, but the project used two trucks that had not been inspected in the past 12 months.

Office of River Protection (ORP): S. Olinger, the acting manager of ORP, was selected to fill the position on a permanent basis. H. Taylor was selected to fill the deputy manager position. Taylor comes from outside DOE and has significant construction experience.