

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 27, 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: J. S. Contardi/M.T. Sautman, SRS Site Representatives
SUBJECT: SRS Report for Week Ending April 27, 2007

DNFSB Activity: Headquarters staff reviewed the Spent Fuel Project, walked down L Basin and H-Canyon, and discussed the revised Liquid Waste Disposition Processing Plan.

Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL): An operator restored valving in the wrong sequence after conducting maintenance because he performed only steps 10 and 13, when the lockout stated to perform steps "10-13." This action closed the air supply to several exhaust dampers and caused multiple low flow exhaust alarms for parts of the Shielded Cells. Although the mistake was quickly noticed by a nearby assessor, the decision was made to valve in the air supply per the skipped steps prior to notifying the Shift Operations Manager. While the actual facility impact was minor, management is addressing the serious Conduct of Operations issues.

Solid Waste Management Facility (SWMF): A beryllium (Be)-contaminated, transuranic waste drum was recently returned to F-Canyon for remediation. When this drum was repacked the first time, it was not labeled as potentially Be-contaminated. An investigation determined that many of the ~1000 drums that may be Be-contaminated are not labeled as such. It was also determined that ~150 of these drums had been processed at F-Canyon, SRNL, and SWMF without a Be protection plan although other controls in place should have prevented Be exposure to workers. Drum remediation has been suspended and Be surveys are being conducted to establish baselines.

K-Area: Field activities for the K-Area Interim Surveillance (KIS) Operational Readiness Review were extended for several days. Work was delayed by a powered air purifying respirator alarm and the inability to remove the inner DOE-STD-3013 container from the outer container. A fire drill was graded unsatisfactory because no one questioned a card reader printout after the evacuation that only listed ~1/13th the expected number of names. Interviews also revealed less than adequate knowledge concerning electronic personnel dosimeters. This was also a management self assessment finding. At SRNL, the Site Rep questioned the rationale for unpacking the oxide samples from the shipping container at the loading dock rather than inside the facility.

The Department of Energy (DOE) directed the contractor to downgrade the Container Surveillance and Storage Capability project fire suppression system from safety class to safety significant.

Saltstone: An investigation determined that the clothing contamination last week was due to the use of 5-gallon bottles, all of which were found to leak even if new and tightened securely.

H-Canyon: A 5-foot diameter depression was found during an inspection of the old sand filter this week. The filter's efficiency was confirmed and this depression will be repaired soon.

Emergency Management: DOE will be transferring the site Emergency Management program and the Fire Department from Washington Savannah River Company to Wackenhut Services Inc.