

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 20, 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: J. S. Contardi/M.T. Sautman, SRS Site Representatives
SUBJECT: SRS Report for Week Ending July 20, 2007

Operations: The upswing in conduct of operations events across the site continued despite significant management attention. The Site Rep attended “all hands” briefings at H Canyon, HB-Line, and B-Area Labs where facility management clearly communicated their expectations.

- Although HB-Line was in a deliberate operations mode, there was a lock out/tag out violation when electrical workers did not sign in on a lock out. They also continued working after a locking device fell off while they were accessing a lighting panel to test a circuit.
- An electrician visiting F/H Labs to take a reading did not check in with the shift manager, became disorientated in the lab, and entered a contamination area in street clothes.
- An unsupervised trainee improperly shut down the Gamma Well Irradiator at B-Area Labs. This left a 20 Ci cesium source up with the shield open at the same time the access control (i.e., laser beam interlock) and emergency stop were disabled.
- While calibrating a glovebox pressure monitor, pressure control was lost and so much oxygen was pulled through a bubbler into a High Activity Stripper glovebox that it exceeded the oxygen concentration Limiting Condition for Operation (LCO). Meanwhile, pressure increased in all the Low Activity Stripper gloveboxes. The lack of procedural guidance for the shift manager on how to properly prepare the glovebox during calibration of its pressure monitor led to this event.

Control Room: The Site Rep reviewed control room logbooks at F/H Labs, F Tank Farms, the Defense Waste Processing Facility, and L Area. The plant status in a shift manager’s log did not reflect an open LCO and corrosion control. Operator aid logbooks were also found to be missing a copy of an aid, inappropriately included draft and/or cancelled procedures, or aids that were not signed. Several hot work permits were not closed out despite expiring months ago.

Modular Caustic-Side Solvent Extraction Unit (MCU): During a recent cold run, the differential pressure across the strip effluent coalescer exceeded the alarm setpoint. Although a visual examination of the coalescer did not find a plug, the media has been sent to the Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL) for more intensive examination.

DOE-STD-3013 Surveillances: The Site Rep walked down the SRNL laboratories used for destructive examination of 3013 containers. Eighteen packaging samples have been generated for metallurgical examination’s from the first 3013 processed through the K-Area Interim Surveillance (KIS) project. The Site Rep also observed can cutting operations in the KIS vault. Engineered tools used to remove the cut sections were either ineffective or broke. Ultimately, only one section was removed, and the means used were not appropriate for a glovebox environment. Due to difficulty with removing the inner container, a timeout was taken to evaluate the stuck containers.

Emergency Preparedness (EP): The contractor is developing corrective actions to deal with repeated weaknesses in the field response during EP drills and exercises. (July 6 weekly report)