

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

January 28, 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: J. S. Contardi, SRS Site Representative
SUBJECT: SRS Report for Week Ending January 28, 2005

FB-Line Operations: This week, FB-Line personnel achieved a significant milestone by completing 3013 packaging activities. Deinventory of FB-Line is expected to occur by the end of February 2005.

TRU Waste Investigation: At the request of the Westinghouse Savannah River Company, an independent team was tasked with performing an assessment of worker protection controls for handling TRU drums with potential explosive atmospheres. This week, the teams findings were released, which documented the root causes for recent events and provided recommendations. The recommendations are summarized as follows; 1) clearly establish expectations to adequately maintain the safety basis, 2) re-analyze the hazards, controls, and procedure implementation for TRU waste processing, 3) ensure the adequacy of the existing safety basis, and 4) develop a methodology to anticipate safety basis changes resulting from the potentially varying characteristics of TRU waste.

Solid Waste Management Facility personnel are implementing controls from a recently approved Justification for Continued Operations for processing of unvented drums. A contractor readiness assessment will be performed prior to resuming this activity.

Tritium Operations: Kanne air monitors provide a safety significant function to protect facility workers from potential tritium releases. This week, a Limiting Condition for Operations (LCO) was entered following the failure of a kanne. The LCO actions were appropriately implemented, which required evacuating the room and establishing alternative air monitoring within 10 minutes. Another existing kanne in the room was utilized to allow reentry. However, the alternative kanne also failed. The alternative kanne alarm was acknowledged by the control room operator but the LCO action statements were not completed. Subsequently, a worker received permission to enter the room to complete rounds. Once Radiological Control personnel identified the failure of alternative kanne, the operator was evacuated from the room. Both kannes failed due to sequencing errors for various sampling points but were still capable of monitoring air activity. During the event, no measurable increase in activity was observed. This is the third event in as many months relating to inadequate implementation of LCO's resulting from air monitoring alarms.

HEU Waste Processing: Following a successful readiness assessment, waste transfers from H-Canyon to Tank 50 have commenced with no operational issues reported. Approximately 1400 gallons have been transferred. A total of 400,000 gallons of unirradiated Mk22 waste is expected to be generated as a result of the program. Another readiness assessment will be conducted in February 2005 for waste transfers involving the general purpose evaporator bottoms.