

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 28, 2008

**TO:** T. J. Dwyer, Technical Director  
**FROM:** M. T. Sautman, Site Representative  
**SUBJECT:** Savannah River Site Weekly Report for Week Ending November 28, 2008

**Conduct of Operations:** The Site Rep met with the lead of the Conduct of Operations Improvement Initiative, which is modeled after the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations SER 3-05, Weaknesses in Operator Fundamentals. One of the goals of Operator Fundamentals is to go beyond verbatim procedure compliance and have the operators use their plant knowledge. For example, before manipulating a valve, the intent is for the operator to understand why they are changing its position, what the expected response should be and how they can validate that result, and understand what action should be taken if they do not get the expected response. SRNS has the lead with this, but is working with WSRC on the program. Once facility operators have been trained, the intent is to expand this initiative to include Radiological Control and Maintenance workers. (7/25/08 report)

**Fire Department:** The Site Rep observed three live burn drills conducted by the SRS Fire Department (SRSFD) in a hypothetical Savannah River Site (SRS) facility at the Fort Gordon Fire Training Facility. The scenarios involved three station responses to extinguish various fires (real fires and smoke generated by propane burners); rescue contaminated, injured workers; and perform decontamination. These drills provide valuable hands-on experience for the SRSFD and Radiological Control Organization (RCO) personnel. Compared to live burn drills observed in 2006 and 2007, there have been improvements in command and control and the setup and use of a decontamination line. This year's drills highlighted the need for additional practice in the transport of contaminated victims and the handling of a simulated collapsed firefighter. In the latter case, his respirator was left on the whole time although he was complaining of shortness of breath. One of the fire department trucks was unavailable for two of the drills due to a mechanical problem. (11/23/07 and 11/14/06 reports)

The Site Rep also observed a discussion between the SRSFD, Solid Waste Management Facility operations, and Emergency Preparedness program personnel to ensure everyone understood the expected response (in particular, which entry gate the SRSFD should use) for events involving various facilities and wind directions. (4/4/08, 10/17/08, and 10/24/08 reports)

**Modular Caustic Side Solvent Extraction Unit (MCU)/Actinide Recovery Process (ARP):** As part of the outage, a new siphon break is being installed on Salt Solution Receipt Tank #1 to address past siphon problems. In addition, modifications are being made to the 96H process vessel vent system to reduce radiation rates. (5/2/08 and 6/27/08 reports)

**Department of Energy (DOE):** A number of personnel changes have been made in the last few weeks for the Savannah River Operations Office (DOE-SR) and the National Nuclear Security Administration Savannah River Site Office (SRO):

- Douglas Dearolph is returning to SRS as the new SRO Manager.
- Karen Guevara is the DOE-SR Assistant Manager for Closure Projects.
- Jim Folk is the DOE-SR Deputy Assistant Manager Waste Disposition Projects.
- Tom Gutmann is the DOE-SR Director, Waste Disposition Programs Division
- Brenda Mills is the Director, Nuclear Materials Programs Division.