

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 18, 2003

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. Grover and M. Sautman, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending April 18, 2003

Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): Messrs. Ogg, Rosen, and Sautman reviewed plutonium stabilization status, residue characterization data, PFP's request to stabilize chlorinated oxides at 750/C, and deactivation and decommissioning strategy. The staff believes a number of the residues could be reactive (e.g., casting skulls, Pu foils, U carbides) and PFP has agreed to thermally stabilize these items if they exhibit any signs of instability when the cans are opened.

When none of the normally used 5-position carts were available, operators placed two bagless transfer cans inside NMC-8 containers (normally used for polycubes) and then on a 2-position cart. This resulted in a single contingency condition since one of the cans contained more than 1600 g Pu when the limit was 450 g. This is the second criticality nonconformance this month where mass limits were exceeded for NMC-8 containers in 2-position carts. The criticality safety posting on this wagon had also not been updated when it was revised last year. (I-C, III-A)

Waste Treatment Plant: The Requirements Implementation Assessment Team decided to further investigate a proposal to eliminate either the 100% testing (and possibly any testing) of important to safety HEPA filters at the Oak Ridge Filter Test Facility. Although testing was directed by the Secretary of Energy, the team believes that this testing is redundant to the manufacturer's testing and that this testing increases the potential to damage the filter elements. In particular, the team intends to challenge the position described in DNFSB/Tech-23, *HEPA Filters Used in the Department of Energy's Hazardous Facilities* and Recommendation 2000-2. (I-C)

T Plant: The Contractor Readiness Assessment (RA) for K East Basin sludge receipt and storage was conducted this week. Operators demonstrated proficiency in conducting activities and procedures were adequate to complete tasks as written. These areas have typically been problematic during readiness reviews at Fluor Hanford operated facilities. All of the trained operators have been involved with the development of procedures and multiple full-cycle dry runs. However, the RA team identified concerns with insufficient numbers of trained operators to perform operations if process delays occur. This is exacerbated by an additional RA finding that the training and qualification program for additional operators is inadequate, the current operators were declared qualified based on their involvement in the development of the process. The Site Rep raised concerns with the DOE line management review team about the adequacy of the emergency preparedness drill scenario. The scenario, a tractor trailer fire in the unoccupied canyon tunnel, did not involve any contamination release, injured workers, or even evacuation of workers from the event scene. In addition, problems were noted with the use of unauthorized as well as unplanned simulations which simplified the response and as a result some aspects of the response were not demonstrated, e.g. second entry by responders to secure event scene and radiological release of personnel and equipment from the simulated controlled areas. (III-A)