

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 21, 2006

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: R. Quirk and W. Linzau, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending April 21, 2006

Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): During a walk-down of PFP, the site rep learned that the fire detection system panel for 234-5Z and 236-Z had been inoperable for more than 48 hours. The local alarm panels were operable but the central panel, which initiates calls to the Hanford Fire Department, was not. As a compensatory measure, walk-downs of the facilities by fire watches every two hours had been initiated. The panel, manufactured by Gamewell, is obsolete and replacement components were not readily available. The ability to maintain aging obsolete safety equipment operable in the PFP will continue to be a challenge. All fire suppression systems credited by the Technical Safety Requirement are operable.

The site rep attended a critique on improper spacing of temporary waste containers (TWCs) in 236-Z. In two different locations, TWCs were spaced less than 36 inches apart as directed by the posting in the area. The spacing discrepancy is a criticality non-conformance but is not reportable because double contingency requirements were maintained. At the time of the critique, the cause of the nonconformance could not be determined.

The site rep attended the monthly Conduct of Operations (Con Ops) Center of Excellence (COE) meeting. The meeting is a corrective action in the Con Ops improvement program initiated six months ago. One issue addressed in the meeting included collecting metrics related to Con Ops immediately after completing work activities. Another issue discussed was increasing COE participation by a broader mix of personnel as most participants were managers. This meeting appeared to be more effective than earlier COE meetings.

River Corridor Closure Project: The site rep conducted a walk-down of remediation activities at burial grounds near the B and C reactors (100 B/C Burial Grounds). The project has completed most of the large-scale rededication and is now cleaning up hot spots in the trenches to allow for final disposition and closure. About eighteen single-pass fuel elements have been found at the site and are currently stored in temporary vaults at the burial grounds. The planned disposition path for the fuel is to transfer it to the K Basins Closure Project.

The site rep also observed the plan of the day meeting and pre-job briefing at the B/C Burial Grounds. The briefings were conducted adequately as demonstrated by discussions on the industrial and radiological hazards and the appropriate controls, use of good communications, and pointed questioning of the work force on the controls for entering high radiation areas.

The Phase I Integrated Safety Management Verification for Washington Closure Hanford started this week and should continue through next week with an out brief with DOE management on April 27, 2006.