

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 27, 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
J. J. McConnell, Deputy Technical Director
FROM: R. T. Davis/ T. D. Burns
SUBJECT: SRS Report for Week Ending June 27, 2003

Staff members R. Kasdorf, J. Contardi and B. Rosen were on site this week reviewing plutonium storage activities. The review focused on container surveillance plans, handling of damaged containers and plutonium analytical capability to support long-term storage of plutonium materials.

SRTC: On Monday, a handi-wipe caught fire in one the shielded cells at the Savannah River Technology Center (SRTC) Building 773-A. An operator was using a remote manipulator to clean an oven that was located in cell #1. During this process, the handi-wipe ignited. The wipe then dropped on a plastic bag and began to smolder. A second operator pushed the manual halon discharge button and the fire was extinguished. Personnel in this area were relocated and the area in front of the cell was barricaded.

There were no personnel injuries or contaminations as a result of this event. However, the halon discharge did cause contamination to spread into an existing airborne contamination area above the cells. There was no spread of contamination into the area outside the cells where operators are located.

The oven had not been used since the previous day. It is likely that the oven was either left on or inadvertently turned on during the cleaning activity. The handi-wipe was soaked with a dilute ethyl alcohol. There were also additional wipes in the cell that were soaked with alcohol. WSRC is evaluating the combustible control program for these cells to ensure adequate implementation.

Depleted Uranium: Site efforts to disposition excess depleted (DU), natural (NU), and low-enriched uranium (LEU) inventories are progressing ahead of schedule (site rep weekly 1/10/2003). The M-Area DU and NU metal inventory (~2,700 metric tons) has been successfully shipped off-site to Envirocare of Utah for disposition.

Additionally, the pilot program to disposition approximately 2,000 metric tons of DU trioxide (~10% of total site inventory) via off-site shipment to Envirocare of Utah is underway. To date, the site has successfully shipped nearly 1,400 metric tons off-site. Given the success of the pilot program, disposition to Envirocare will likely be the preferred option for the balance of the site's DU trioxide inventory.

FB-Line: WSRC continues to package plutonium metal into DOE-STD-3013 containers. To date, 311 3013 containers have been welded. Project activities also continue to support oxide stabilization in FB-Line. Last week, WSRC transmitted authorization basis documents to DOE-SR for approval. WSRC appears to be on schedule to began oxide stabilization this Fall.