

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 23, 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: J. S. Contardi/M.T. Sautman, SRS Site Representatives
SUBJECT: SRS Report for Week Ending March 23, 2007

Transuranic (TRU) Waste Repackaging: While conducting activities for a filter efficiency test, the radiological work permit (RWP) suspension guides were exceeded. The test required removal of a blast gate and the reinstallation once the test was completed. The work was performed without procedures or a hazard analysis. The blast gate was removed and bagged without incident. While removing the blast gate from the bag (which was not properly labeled) for reinstallation, significant contamination was found. One worker had 200,000 dpm (alpha) on his outer protective clothing and 1,000,000 dpm (alpha) was measured on the blast gate. The RWP suspension guideline for contamination was 50,000 dpm (alpha). Work was stopped but further radiological surveys were conducted prior to exiting the area. All involved workers successfully exited the area without further spread of contamination.

Saltstone Operations: During a recent process run, the mixer developed a small leak. The leak was contained within a secondary containment and the mixer packing was replaced this week. Due to the leak the process run was cut short and only 16,000 gallons were processed. The Site Rep observed the packing replacement and walked down Vault 4 including construction activities relating to ventilation upgrades. Due to a legal challenge relating to a saltstone permit, saltstone operations were put on hold pending resolution later in the week.

TRU Waste Operations: The contractor is completing construction activities which will allow the nondestructive examination of TRU waste contained within large boxes. The new process will be contained with the Low-Activity Waste Vaults. The Site Rep recently met with contractor and Department of Energy (DOE) representatives to discuss the hazard analysis and the basis for the proposed controls.

Building 299-H: As discussed in the 3/09/07 SRS weekly, the Site Reps identified an inoperable building pressure gage in the facility control room. Subsequent followup by DOE determined that the gage was not installed correctly.

Steel Creek Dam: The Site Rep walked down the Steel Creek earth dam with DOE engineering and contractor geotechnical personnel to inspect two spots near the outlet works where water is flowing from the ground. The Site Rep discussed the possibility of seepage, plans to monitor and control the flows, and reviewed sediment contamination results.

H-Canyon: While entering the crane maintenance area, one of the new hot crane wheels climbed on top of the rail.

Salt Processing: Startup testing was completed for the Actinide Removal Project. Simulant testing began at the Modular Caustic Side Solvent Extraction Unit.