DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 26, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: J. S. Contardi/M.T. Sautman, SRS Site Representatives
SUBJECT: SRS Report for Week Ending May 26, 2006

M. Sautman was out of the office this week.

FB-Line Deactivation: With the exception of electrical power, all major systems have been deactivated in FB-Line. In addition, during a recent walk down the site rep observed that all major process areas have been sealed and doorways locked. Final characterization surveys are being performed and procedures developed for periodic reentries once the facility is deactivated, which is expected to occur in mid-June 2006.

Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL): Earlier this week a laboratory technician discovered a leaking sample bottle which had been double bagged per procedure. Both bags were J-sealed but a small amount of liquid was observed on the outside of the outermost bag. A significant amount of liquid was observed within the inner bag. The technician stopped work and notified a nearby radiological control technician. Contamination surveys found 53,000 dpm (alpha) and 50,000 dpm (beta/gamma).

The liquid sample was generated from an acid dissolution of a radiological swipe. The swipe was similar to a wet-wipe and off-gassing was expected during the dissolution. However, the dissolution process may not have completely destroyed all organic material prior to sample preparation. Evaluation of additional samples identified pressure buildup which may have contributed to sample bottle leaking. Last week, samples generated through this process resulted in an ORPS reportable contamination event (Site Rep. Weekly 5/19/06). Facility management has suspended all work involving nitric acid dissolution of the wet swipes until the appropriate corrective actions have been completed.

SRNL Transuranic (TRU) Waste Packaging: During the recent readiness assessment for TRU waste packaging, a drill relating to a continuous air monitor alarm was unsatisfactory. This was identified as a pre-start finding and the drill was performed again this week. The complexity of the drill was increased and was similar to an actual event that occurred in E-Area which resulted in a small intake. Facility personnel responded properly to the drill and no significant issues were identified.

Saltstone Processing Facility (SPF): As reported last week, nitrogen inerting is not a feasible option for the existing disposal vaults. Two main options are now being evaluated which include inerting the yet to be built Vault #2 and grout temperature controls to reduce the rate of flammable gas generation. With the recent direction to recover Tank 48 thru organic destruction, only small quantities of Tetraphenylborate will be sent to SPF and temperature controls should be capable of preventing flammable atmospheres resulting from other sources (e.g., SWPF and MCU).

Salt Waste Processing Facility: This week, the Site Rep met with representatives from Parsons to discuss the status of design and future Board's staff interactions.