

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 1, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: J. S. Contardi/M.T. Sautman, SRS Site Representatives
SUBJECT: SRS Report for Week Ending December 1, 2006

DNFSB Activity: Staff member J. Shackelford and the Site Reps conducted a review of site-level implementation of specific administrative controls (SAC) and an in-depth review of the draft H-Canyon SACs. While the H-Canyon SACs are heavily based on longstanding process controls, the staff identified a number of cases where the specificity of the SAC could be improved.

Saltstone: Last week, the environmental permits to operate the saltstone facility were received for processing of Batch 0 material. Batch 0 material currently resides in Tank 50 and consists primarily of unirradiated waste products and Effluent Treatment Facility evaporator concentrate. However, some mechanical issues need to be resolved before grouting operations can begin. Debris needs to be removed from a welded section of the leachate system piping that has been obstructing flow. In addition, the contractor identified a problem with the pumping of a liquid grout additive. The current pump is undersized and a new pump will have to be installed. This issue could have been identified earlier if the additive had not been simulated through the use of water.

Contamination Spread: During sampling activities for Tank 7, radiological technicians identified contamination near the job site. Additional surveys found contamination on the personnel protective equipment (PPE) of several workers (e.g., shoe covers) as well as on the ground. The maximum contamination found on the PPE was approximately 50,000 dpm and 100,000 dpm on the ground. A glovebag was used to control contamination during the job. No contamination was found on the glovebag but 80,000 dpm (transferable) and 1,500,000 dpm (fixed) was found on the glove bag support. A critique was held and corrective actions were developed, which focused on performing additional surveys to determine the source of the contamination. The response to the event was adequate.

Tritium Extraction Facility (TEF): All pre-start findings associated with the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) Operational Readiness Review have been closed and NNSA has authorized the start of nuclear operations. All items on the TEF Tritium Introduction Checklist have been completed. The first cask containing Tritium Producing Burnable Absorber Rods will be unloaded next week. The contractor's response to NNSA's letter on equipment reliability stated that the performances of the Target Rod Prep and Heating, Ventilation, and Cooling systems were acceptable despite several failures during the two Operational Readiness Reviews.

Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL): The site inventory of transuranic waste drums that could be remediated at SRNL was exhausted last week. Repackaging operations have stopped, but are still continuing at F-Canyon and the Solid Waste Management Facility (e.g., Modular Repackaging System).