

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 1, 2002

TO: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. F. Owen, RFETS Site Representative
SUBJECT: RFETS Activity Report for the Week Ending March 1, 2002

Recommendation 94-1. Kaiser-Hill recently completed repackaging ash residues, completing a major category of residues in the overall effort to repackage all RFETS plutonium residues by May 2002. Remaining residues include wet combustible and dry residues. (3-A)

Recommendation 2000-2. As reported last week, DOE-RFFO had started the detailed (Phase II) assessments of the confinement ventilation and fire protection systems in Building 371 and had identified small holes in the ventilation system duct-work and incorrectly installed sprinklers in Building 371. In followup this week, Kaiser-Hill identified several more incorrectly installed sprinkler heads in other facilities. The Phase II assessment team has completed their field work, is completing development of findings and recommendations, and expects to brief the results to RFETS management during the week of March 4th. (1-C)

Work Planning. Workers in Building 776/777 were performing an operation to remove tape marking certain contaminated surfaces on a glovebox and the floor and paint over those surfaces to cover the contamination. During the operation, a worker pulled tape that was not intended to be removed covering a protruding nipple underneath the glovebox that opened a path from the inside of the glovebox to the room. This action resulted in air monitor alarms and high airborne levels. In a discussion with the site rep. and staff, Kaiser-Hill management stated that this work was being done under a "craft work" category described as "general upkeep painting..." This is one of several categories of work listed in the RFETS manual on work planning that does not require a specific Job Hazard Analysis (JHA). Upon further discussion, RFETS management indicated that such an operation did not fit the general upkeep painting category, and accordingly, a JHA would have been required per RFETS work planning requirements. This work planning aspect of the occurrence, however, had not been addressed by Kaiser-Hill prior to the discussion. Kaiser-Hill management indicated that a "lessons learned" would be promulgated to emphasize proper adherence to RFETS requirements covering craft work. (1-C)

Decontamination of Gloveboxes and Other Components. Gloveboxes and components that cannot be decontaminated to meet low-level waste criteria must often be size reduced to fit in approved transuranic waste packages. During the past year, Kaiser-Hill has made improvements to their decontamination processes. The decontamination activities are performed using various liquid solutions. As reported on July 6th, Building 371 was preparing to use a cerium acid solution to decontaminate the inner surface of stainless steel tanks. Most recently, Building 771 has used this cerium acid solution to successfully decontaminate some of their more highly contaminated gloveboxes. An advantage of cerium acid is that simply spraying the solution on surfaces has often been effective whereas use of other solutions require workers to perform surface wipe downs to achieve adequate decontamination. These decontamination efforts have greatly reduced the number of gloveboxes and components requiring size reduction than had been projected. (3-B)