

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

September 27, 2002

**TO:** J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director  
**FROM:** D. F. Owen, RFETS Site Representative  
**SUBJECT:** RFETS Activity Report for the Week Ending September 27, 2002

**Response to the Board Letter of March 19, 2002.** The Board's letter forwarded to the DOE Office of Environmental Management (DOE-EM) staff observations on (1) activity-level work planning, (2) DOE-RFFO oversight of activity-level work planning, and (3) proper cause determination for occurrences at RFETS. The DOE-EM June 25<sup>th</sup> response identified actions to address the observations. The site rep. and staff reviewed RFETS progress. Since the site rep. reports of August 23<sup>rd</sup> and September 6<sup>th</sup>, some progress has been made by Kaiser-Hill but little progress has been made by DOE-RFFO in implementing these actions. Specifically:

- DOE-RFFO has not completed monthly reviews of work planning packages in each major project (was to start June 2002).
- DOE-RFFO has not performed the scheduled quarterly assessment of an entire work planning effort (the first assessment was performed in the April-June time period, as reported on Sept. 6<sup>th</sup>).
- DOE-RFFO has not performed a comprehensive semi-annual assessment of work planning (was to start June 2002).
- DOE-RFFO has not completed the action calling for DOE-RFFO senior management to reiterate its commitment to fully understand the root cause of occurrences and ensure proper corrective actions have been determined (no specific commitment date).
- The Kaiser-Hill action to disseminate case studies of events to demonstrate/illustrate proper cause determination has still not been completed (due June 2002, see August 23<sup>rd</sup> site rep. report).
- About two weeks ago, Kaiser-Hill issued a site-wide directive to the projects to implement a mentoring program for work planning personnel to improve activity-level work planning (due July 2002). Site-wide implementation is not expected until October 1<sup>st</sup> (due August 31<sup>st</sup>).

The site rep. discussed with senior DOE-RFFO management the lack of progress and apparent lack of tracking and management review of these actions contained in the DOE-EM response. DOE-RFFO management indicated that they would take corrective measures. Per the DOE-EM response, DOE-RFFO will discuss these response actions with the Board in October. (1-C)

**Conduct of Operations.** As reported last week, a procedural step labeled as important to criticality safety (annotated by a "circle CS") was not accomplished in removing a tank containing greater than 500 grams plutonium from its supports in Building 771; the step was intended to restrict this movement. This occurrence was externally reported but no formal fact-finding was planned until site rep. inquiry. This week, it was discovered that a Building 707 work crew violated a "circle CS" step limiting plutonium to 200 grams in a 55-gallon waste drum based on 95% confidence mass values (the waste item values added to 270 grams). The supervisor, worker and "waste verifier" were using mass scan values listed on an E-mail printout, instead of using the normal scan printout that clearly defines the type of mass scan value. The E-mail, discussing accountability issues, provided no indication that the mass values were 95% confidence (they were nominal values). A fact-finding was conducted but the event was not externally reported until site rep. inquiry. The site rep. discussed the apparent lack of deliberate, formal conduct of these tasks and these management follow-up observations with senior RFETS management. (1-C)