

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 13, 2001

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. Grover and M. Sautman, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending April 13, 2001

Messrs. Graham and Martin conducted a review of software quality assurance.

Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): PFP welded their first outer can that meets the standard for the long-term storage of plutonium. Subsequent investigations after last week's false criticality alarm at PFP identified that a wooden box had been placed around a criticality detector without the criticality safety representative's knowledge. In addition, two criticality alarms were found to have had their orientation changed during construction work on a roof. One alarm had been moved 180 degrees and failed an audibility test. The PFP Director is instituting a number of administrative controls to avoid affecting safety systems during construction activities. (1-C)

224-T: Fluor Hanford conducted a standard startup review for characterizing 224-T's process cells remotely. So far, most of the review teams comments have been minor. Mr. Sautman identified a number of minor procedural issues that were addressed. Workers equipped with supplied air will be using a robotic crawler to perform radiation surveys and perform nondestructive assays of the cells' tanks. Unfortunately, characterization will not begin until negotiations regarding a permit for the tent's exhausters are completed. (3-B)

Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): On March 28, DOE Richland (DOE-RL) issued a letter requesting that Fluor Hanford develop actions to address the continuing conduct of operations problems at SNFP facilities. This week Mr. Grover attended the common cause analysis performed by the project to aid in developing these actions. This analysis was a crosscutting look at the findings of the root cause analyses previously performed in response to the findings mentioned in the DOE-RL letter. It did not appear that either a review of the adequacy of these previous analyses or an examination of operational data to identify other problems was done to increase the likelihood that the resulting corrective actions will address the root causes of the operational problems. (3-A)

Tank Farms: Mr. Sautman observed valve pit jobs in two tank farms. In the first case, construction workers in AZ farm were using an impact wrench suspended by a crane to remove a highly contaminated nozzle. After the job, the Site Rep was notified that the air sample taken during the job was found to have an average reading exceeding 0.1 DAC, which would have required respirators (unless it is determined to be due to radon). The second pit job in AY farm was cancelled after the 14,400 lb cover block would not move even when the crane was pulling with a force of 18,000 lbs. (1-C)

cc: Board Members