

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 20, 2001

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director

FROM: D. Grover and M. Sautman, Hanford Site Representatives

SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending July 20, 2001

Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): Last week, the Board's staff questioned PFP's intent to rely on increasingly more complicated administrative combustible controls rather than just making the ventilation shutdown-fire alarm interlock a safety system. This interlock shuts down the ventilation system during a fire in ZB Building in order to avoid overpressurizing plugged high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters. This week, the site decided to upgrade the credited safety classification of the interlock to safety class. (I-C)

PFP commenced their Readiness Assessment for the packaging of high-purity plutonium oxide into DOE Standard 3013 cans. One potential issue is the possibility of moisture reabsorption by oxide between the time that a vented lid is placed on the bagless transfer convenience can or BTCC (after loss-on-ignition results are available) and when the BTCC is welded inside a bagless transfer system (BTS) can. The project manager has stated that it his intent to weld the BTS can within the same shift or to place the unvented lid back on the BTCC if this cannot be accomplished. However, there is a reluctance to put this expectation in the procedure. (III-A)

Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): The SNFP production director, i.e. the manager in charge of operations, for the project resigned this week. The site reps met with Mr. Serrano, the acting production director, to discuss issues identified in recent Hanford site representative activity reports. Mr. Serrano made a number of specific commitments to address these issues as well as his intent to clarify the expectations for conduct of operations and management's responsibilities to achieve these expectations. (III-A)

The SNFP also identified quality assurance (QA) issues at the vendor fabricating the canister cleaning equipment needed to remove emptied fuel storage canisters from the basin. The issues included procedural compliance problems as well as welding not being performed to the NQA-1 requirements invoked by the procurement specification. The issues were identified during an unscheduled inspection at the vendor signifying a continued proactive approach to QA by the project which also identified problems early this year with the QA program for the Multi-Canister Overpack fabricator during receipt inspections. The project plans to assign a resident inspector to the canister cleaner vendor until it is satisfied that QA problems have been adequately addressed. The project is also maintaining a resident inspector at the MCO fabricator. (I-C)

cc: Board Members