

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 22, 1999

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director
K. Fortenberry, Deputy Technical Director
FROM: D. F. Owen, D. J. Grover, RFETS Site Representatives
SUBJECT: RFETS Activity Report for the Week Ending October 22, 1999

Recommendation 94-1. The site reps. and staff held discussions with RFETS personnel on planned changes to the DOE Implementation Plan for Recommendation 94-1 related to shipping sand, slag and crucible residues to WIPP in lieu of SRS and packaging most wet/combustible residues in a configuration that will not initially meet the Interim Safe Storage Criteria (see site rep. reports of August 27, and October 1, 1999). DOE-RFFO will be proposing changes to DOE-Headquarters for inclusion in the Implementation Plan revision that is now in development. RFETS continues to review options for disposition of plutonium fluorides.

RFETS has completed hot start-up testing of the packaging portion of the Plutonium Stabilization and Packaging System. The control of the system has been transferred to building operations which has begun procedure verification and validation as well as initiating operator on-the-job training. The initial dimensional tolerance testing of the inner containers has been successfully completed. Fabrication of the inner containers is now expected to proceed to support packaging. The production of the first 3013-compliant package is not expected until early January. This is due chiefly to construction and testing delays. Building 707 has begun to prepare plutonium metal as feed material to support the packaging campaign. (3-A)

Building 771 Deactivation. Size reduction operations on a third contaminated glovebox were completed in the new Inner Tent Chamber (ITC) this week. Temporary spikes of airborne levels outside the ITC to several thousand DAC continue to be observed during transfer of size-reduced glovebox pieces from within the ITC to the waste box located outside the ITC. RFETS is considering adding task exhaust ventilation to the area near the waste box.

RFETS has added a fixed-location air sampler inside the ITC to gather additional data to support a potential future decision to downgrade personal protective equipment (PPE) for ITC operations (see site rep report of September 10, 1999). The location of the added fixed-location air sampler is not near the workers breathing zone, but is believed to give conservative estimates of the airborne levels based on prior air-flow testing inside the ITC. So far, the highest two-hour average level inside the ITC has been about 103,000 DAC. Such levels will likely limit downgraded PPE options. (3.B)

Meeting with Union Representatives. The site reps. met with senior officials from Local 8031 of the United Steelworkers of America to discuss site rep. activities as well as union safety concerns.

cc: Board Members