

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 6, 1998

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director
FROM: R. F. Warther, M. T. Sautman

SUBJ: RFETS Activity Report for Week Ending February 6, 1998

B771 Tap and Drain. Approximately 28 liters of solution were drained from the two oxalic acid system tanks and associated site glasses on the second floor. Draining at the remaining 6 locations was delayed because of a pipe plug that was not able to be removed and an unrelated contamination release in one of the rooms. Taps have been installed at the originally planned location as well as at the drain point with the stuck pipe plug.

Shift Manager (SM) Oral Board. The Site Reps observed a requalification oral board for a B371 SM. The candidate had numerous weaknesses associated with every question. The board chairman stopped the oral board after only one hour because it was clear the candidate was not prepared. It appears that the Site Reps' efforts to raise the expected level of performance have had some success since past weekly reports have noted several concerns with the rigor of B371 oral boards. However, the Site Reps have observed a site-wide weakness for determining when a SM or Shift Technical Advisor candidate is ready for an oral board.

Plutonium Stabilization and Packaging System. Furnace testing results have improved over the past week. Thermocouples were used to measure the furnace temperature as well as the temperature of cerium oxide placed in two trays. It took a little more than 2 hours for the cerium oxide to reach 950°C and about 8 hours for the furnace to cool down. The total 12 - 13 hour furnace cycle time is much better than previous 27 hour cycles, but still more than originally anticipated.

Recommendation 94-3. The Site Reps and Staff have been working with RFFO to submit the revised Recommendation 94-3 IPP. RFFO has decided that upgrades to B371 will continue lacking any substantial information to indicate that Pu materials will be shipped off site. Much of the discussion is focused on two issues. First, what specific shipping and risk reduction progress must be demonstrated to obviate the need for further upgrades. Second, the need for upgrades will be linked to August 1, 1998 implementation of the B371 BIO. Most of these issues were resolved, and RFFO plans to transmit the IPP to DOE-HQ next week.

Emergency Preparedness. As a follow-up to last week's drill, K-H has scheduled several table-top drills to assess emergency situations at RFETS. These drills are being directed by the K-H Radiological Controls manager. The intent is to augment the existing drill schedule with additional, remedial table top exercises to ensure performance is rapidly improved. In addition to ensuring the site is prepared for the site-wide emergency preparedness exercise scheduled for April, K-H also recognizes the importance of ensuring multiple personnel are adequately trained to assess emergency situations.

cc: Board Members