

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 16, 2015

TO: S. A. Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: M. T. Sautman and D. L. Burnfield, Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Savannah River Site Weekly Report for Week Ending October 16, 2015

HB-Line: DOE approved the HB-Line Response Plan (see 9/11/15 report). This outlined the steps for transferring three cans of plutonium metal samples from 5-gallon pails into primary containment vessel carts. The current configuration resulted in a violation of the criticality safety control on spacing between fissile material containers that are in transit within a Transition Area. The site rep attended the prejob briefing and observed workers safely bring these items back into compliance. The site reps continue to watch SRNS conduct their root cause analysis of the original event. Completion of this analysis is a prerequisite for HB-Line to transition from an operational pause into deliberate operations.

Tritium Extraction Facility (TEF): The site rep observed a second shift crew conduct an emergency preparedness drill simulating an explosion of an accountability tank that resulted in an unmonitored stack release. While emergency responders reacted very differently this week, their response was still weak. The incident scene coordinator and first aid responders met the fire department (FD) outside TEF; however, the workers at the scene of the explosion were forgotten and it was 35 minutes before anybody arrived to assist an unconscious victim. The control room issued protective actions and took mitigative actions much faster, but the declaration of a site area emergency was still slow. Due to a lack of available controllers, both the FD entry team and FD captain were not monitored by controllers for part of the time. The FD captain called a time out that was not coordinated with the controllers when his available resources could not perform a contaminated patient transfer using standard protocols.

Recommendation 2012-1, Savannah River Site Building 235-F Safety: F-Area remains in deliberate operations. This week the 235-F team removed the second window from shielded cell number 8. Work continues to progress at a safe pace with proper planning before the actions are taken.

Tank Farms: Tank farms have several tasks that need to be processed through the building 299-H Decontamination Facility. While SRR personnel manage the facility, it is located within the boundaries of H-Area and services such as ventilation are supplied by SRNS. The tank farms work has been on hold while SRNS worked through the actions necessary to return the ventilation system to an operational status following the pause. This delay was partially due to the need for SRNS procurement personnel to find and obtain the necessary parts. Vital tank farms operations have not been affected by this delay and the facility is now in the planned fall steam outage.

K-Area: SRNS approved transferring K-area to deliberate operations as the next step in exiting the pause. The facility manager will take the actions to begin deliberate operations at the facility early next week.