

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 4, 2005

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. Grover and M. Sautman, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending February 4, 2005

Waste Treatment Plant (WTP): The Site Rep walked down the Pretreatment and Low Activity Waste (LAW) Facilities to examine the locations of recent safety incidents, quality concerns, and structural steel fireproofing. A near miss was declared when a 2 - 3 lb. drift pin was being removed with a sledge hammer and it shot out ~40 feet horizontally, bounced off the metal deck floor below, punctured a plastic containment wall, and missed a worker on the other side of the plastic sheet by only six to twelve inches. Subcontractors began fireproofing structural steel on the +3' elevation LAW where the steel is easy to access. Future work in the lower level will be more difficult since it is very congested with ducts, pipes, and other equipment.

An Office of River Protection inquiry into several worker allegations at the WTP construction site found that workers described a chilling effect with regard to fear of retaliation for reporting safety, medical, and labor relations issues. Approximately 20% of the workers interviewed described harassment, intimidation, and fear of termination when using the first aid facility on the site or after using a private physician and an equal percentage voiced the belief that when individuals raise safety concerns, those individuals are targeted for future lay off lists.

Tank Farms: On Monday, a damaged fitting on a self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) downstream of the regulator allowed air to enter the area between the primary and secondary hose until the secondary hose pressurized and burst. Work was suspended until all other SCBA units could be inspected for similar wear. In addition, one of the two vacuum pumps associated with retrieval of tank C-203 failed, resulting in a small leak on the vacuum pump water separator vessel top plate flange.

The Site Rep attended an Integrated Safety Management System (ISMS)/Safe Work Environment training session for CH2M Hill Hanford Group managers. Topics addressed included the importance of a safety culture; how managers should handle safety issues raised by employees; the interrelationship of ISMS and safe work environment; and expectations for employees, managers, and senior managers. Lessons learned from the Challenger, Columbia, and industrial accidents were discussed and chapters of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board Report were distributed. The Site Rep also met with federal and contractor managers to discuss their response to the Board's reporting requirement on tank space management and chemistry. The training session had several good messages and the site's response to the Board's reporting requirement has been encouraging so far.

K Basin Closure Project (KBC): The site rep observed sludge retrieval activities. Basin conditions and work practices continue to impede the performance of this work to the point that additional milestones are in jeopardy. KBC has had an outside Fluor manager observe activities to suggest process improvements that may aid in reducing the anticipated schedule delays.