DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

August 1, 2025

TO: Technical Director
FROM: Savannah River Site Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Savannah River Site Activity Report for Week Ending August 1, 2025

Savannah River Tritium Enterprise (SRTE): SRTE reported a Technical Safety Requirements (TSR) violation when they discovered a scaffold that caused an obstruction to their safety-significant fire suppression system in H-Area New Manufacturing (HANM). There were three work orders to support replacement of a valve: one to erect the scaffold, one to remove the insulation on the valve, and one to replace the valve. Prior to installing the walkboard on the scaffold, workers should have notified the control room and a qualified fire protection engineer so that the latter could evaluate the scaffold for any obstructions to the fire suppression system. Rigging personnel had installed the scaffold frame a month prior, but they did not put the walkboard up, as facility personnel were not ready to work on the valve at the time. Without the walkboard on the scaffold, there was no impairment to the fire suppression system. A month later, construction was tasked to remove the insulation on the valve. A construction worker placed the walkboard on the scaffold so that the next day they could use the scaffold to reach the valve. Though facility management performs daily walkdowns of HANM, the obstruction was not discovered until three days later, when a shift manager was walking down the area. Upon discovery, facility personnel entered the appropriate Limiting Condition for Operation (LCO), which requires fire patrols in the impacted area. During the issue investigation, several issues were noted. Workers had installed the walkboard without the correct work package, and they did not communicate to the control room that they intended to install it. In addition, the work packages were misleading. For example, near the top of the work order for installing the scaffold, the package stated there were no TSR impacts, despite recognition later in the package that fire protection would need to be contacted to evaluate for any impairments once boards were installed on the scaffold. Facility personnel conducted walkdowns of SRTE to ensure they are in the appropriate LCOs for all scaffold obstructions, and they did not find any other obstructions that were not already addressed. As a compensatory measure, work management is reviewing all open and upcoming scaffold work packages to ensure they have the appropriate approvals by fire protection, steps for evaluating LCO impacts, and steps for fire protection evaluation.

Salt Waste Processing Facility (SWPF): SWPF personnel conducted a Facility Radiological Assessment Team (FRAT) for work to isolate a leak on one strip effluent transfer pump's casing drain valves. The effort by the facility to mitigate the increased dose hazard caused by the valve leak has been ongoing (see 5/30/2025 report), and several options were considered. The FRAT focused on the option that would result in the least amount of dose to the workers, and the team discussed individual stay times, ergonomics in the field, and shielding effectiveness on dose rates in the room. It was clear to the resident inspector (RI) that, even though the isolation option did not seem to be the most ideal for operations, management selected it as the path forward because it introduced the least amount of radiological dose hazard to the workers. The RI notes that the rigor and deliberate processes that SWPF personnel have used to navigate this recent challenge are indicators of the importance they are putting on worker safety. Personnel are discussing a long-term plan for the repair of the drain valve.