

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 6, 2003

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. Grover and M. Sautman, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending June 6, 2003

Tank Farms: The Site Rep attended pre-job briefs and observed preparations for the start of sluicing in C-106 (to flatten out the sludge before oxalic acid addition) and the external transfer of the consolidated solutions in 244-AR Vault. Although a Management Self-Assessment was completed last week for sluicing, work was delayed when new workers assigned to this activity expressed concern that they were not familiar with the equipment and procedure (which was later revised). Sluicing preparations were further delayed when a worker issued a stop work order on all tank intrusive activities (e.g., installing a camera in the tank headspace) due to concerns with preparations for handling contaminated workers. When sluicing finally began on Thursday, it was quickly stopped when the sluicing nozzle would not move. (III-B)

Waste Treatment Plant (WTP): Bechtel National Inc. (BNI) is revising their estimates for the amount of structural steel fireproofing that will be required by switching from the Universal Building Code to the International Building Code (IBC). The staff intends to review the application of the IBC and the basis for the estimates. Initial estimates indicate that the amount of fireproofing in the Low Activity Waste facility could be reduced by more than 80%.

The Site Rep reviewed the root cause analysis of some recent events involving pour cards at the construction site and BNI's subsequent review of all the completed permanent plant construction installation records. The root cause of each event was found to be the same: less than adequate management reinforcement of expectation for quality documents. Contributing causes include lack of or inadequate direction in procedures, training deficiencies, problems that arose when field and quality control engineers changed in the middle of the inspection/placement process, and the lack of management assessments of document quality. The record review found that 22% of the quality affecting records to be unacceptable and that 36% of the non-quality construction installation documents had reported errors. While the significance of each individual error was minor, the Site Rep believes the 471 records that had errors should be viewed as possible precursors to a future quality problem which could be more significant. (I-C)

Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): The plan proposed by SNFP to accelerate fuel removal and deactivation of fuel processing capability has the potential to result in some fuel not having a currently approved disposition path. This approach is not consistent with the philosophy of sequencing the shutdown of facilities so as to eliminate the feed streams before the processing capability. The fuel which is anticipated to be buried in the sludge would require the development of another processing and packaging design equivalent to Nuclear Regulatory Commission spent fuel storage facilities in order to remain consistent with the commitments in the Recommendation 94-1 Implementation Plan. (III-A)

cc: Board Members