

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 13, 2012

TO: T. J. Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: W. Linzau and R. Quirk, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Hanford Activity Report for the Week Ending April 13, 2012

Board staff members P. Fox and J. MacSleyne were on-site to discuss the Board's letter on erosion at the Waste Treatment Plant and the project's response.

Spent Nuclear Fuel (SNF): The contractor recently discovered that they lost configuration control of the Safety Analysis Report for the Cold Vacuum Drying Facility due to a series of administrative errors. During an extent of condition review, they identified a similar error with a TSR for the 100 K West Basin. The site rep questioned both Richland Operations Office (RL) and contractor management if they have confidence that the controls are still in place to ensure the upcoming work in these facilities can and will be performed safely. The site rep confirmed that the contractor completed a detailed scrub and independent validation review of the authorization basis and approved work procedures. A senior RL manager agreed to ensure that there is adequate RL oversight and that the contractor is able to perform work with SNF safely.

Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): A window in the wall of the highly contaminated canyon of the Plutonium Reclamation Facility was broken when a worker mistakenly knocked a wrench from its resting place. The wrench was staged inside the canyon for use during pencil tank size reduction. Fortunately, no measurable contamination from inside the canyon was released. The glass was repaired by gluing a Lexan plate over the broken window to restore confinement. The site rep questioned why no critique was held for this event as it was a near miss to a significant spread of contamination. A senior manager at PFP concurred that a critique is required.

Waste Treatment Plant (WTP): The Office of River Protection (ORP) started an assessment of the contractor hazard analysis (HA) process. During the last few years, the site reps have observed HA sessions and noted significant variability in quality and rigor. The contractor has taken steps to improve these analyses, including hiring a manager who is tasked to ensure consistent quality from the various HA teams. The ORP assessment will review the programmatic, procedural, and technical requirements of the contractor's HA process and evaluate ongoing HA sessions. A final report is scheduled to be completed in May.

Central Plateau: The contractor's Nuclear Safety and Performance Evaluation Board (NSPEB) completed its first formal review of operations at the Soil and Groundwater Remediation Project. The NSPEB was created in response to problems noted by the Board at the Waste Encapsulation and Storage Facility. The review identified more than 30 findings and an over-arching concern with the rigor and formality of work performance. The NSPEB noted that much of the work was performed in a casual manner and not consistent with contractor procedures for work control. A similar review has started at the Waste and Fuels Management Project (WFMP).

WFMP has also commenced a management assessment (MA) to evaluate or improve conduct of operations, personnel qualifications and training, and work processes. The assessment is a follow-on activity from the re-organization that combined multiple separate projects after the end of stimulus funding. Identified improvements will be implemented during the next 18 months and one of the goals of this MA is to ensure that the project is prepared to resume operations.