

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 18, 1998

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: M. T. Sautman

SUBJECT: RFETS Activity Report for Week Ending December 18, 1998

Electrical Safety. In response to the electric shock discussed in last week's report, SSOC is inspecting junction boxes in B371 to see if they are properly grounded. So far, the inspection has found that every junction box that dates back to the original construction of B371 has lacked a grounding strap (i.e., a mechanical connection to a grounded embedded junction box). Workers have been fixing this as they inspect the junction boxes. About 25 percent of the junction boxes are properly grounded. These, however, all appear to be new installations or those that have been modified in the past. The emergency light fixture vendor also determined the cause of the short circuit. All of the emergency light fixtures are being inspected and repaired as needed.

Plutonium Packaging System. K-H completed the original scope of the post-acceptance test plan for the plutonium packaging system. In addition to the 60 cans already packaged, K-H will be running some additional oxide cans since they are trying to resolve a problem with the laser shutter. K-H is also starting to develop the work package for disassembling the plutonium packaging system in Broomfield. They hope to start disassembly in early February.

Plutonium Solutions. Workers have removed more than 400 feet of highly contaminated piping associated with the high-level dissolution system in B771. RMRS expects to finish removing this system's piping over the weekend.

Facility Representative (FR) Qualifications. RFFO is revising their qualification program for FRs. As discussed in the November 20 report, there is a desire to have at least some the FRs cover multiple facilities rather than be assigned to just one. New FRs would complete a site specific qualification package that would be developed for all RFFO assessors. FRs would then complete a generic facility FR qualification package rather than a facility specific one. For example, FRs would be taught the generic operation of ventilation systems, but would not be trained on specific ones like B371's ventilation system. In addition, RFFO is considering eliminating the formal requalification program and rely instead on a more formal and rigorous continuing training program. The Site Rep has discussed this proposal with the technical staff. The staff's main concern is that the current FRs' in-depth knowledge could be lost and that the FRs could become little more than everyday conduct of operations assessors. If it is desired that the FRs cover multiple buildings, their training program would be stronger if it familiarized them with the systems for the group of buildings they will be overseeing rather than just discussing generic systems. Furthermore, based on Site Rep observations and FR feedback, the current continuing training program is weak and would need to be substantially strengthened to ensure that the FRs' skills are maintained. The Site Rep intends to review the revised standard in more depth when the draft standard is available in January.

cc: Board members