

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 9, 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: J. S. Contardi/M.T. Sautman, SRS Site Representatives
SUBJECT: SRS Report for Week Ending March 9, 2007

DOE Radiological Assessment: As part of their implementation of DOE Order 226.1, DOE recently completed the first comprehensive Type I assessment focusing on the contractor's radiation protection program. The team identified four deficiencies, three observations, and two good practices. Some of the issues addressed by the findings included implementation of the As Low As Reasonably Achievable (ALARA) program and the feedback and improvement system.

F/H Laboratory: The Site Rep observed the cutting and removal of the degraded section of the high activity drain line (Site Rep weekly 2/2/07). The work was performed in a high contamination and high radiation area. The job was successfully completed without incident, however, the Site Rep did identify several issues with the conduct of the job. These issues included less than adequate communication of potential hazards, several instances of at-risk behaviors, and less than adequate implementation of ALARA principles.

Saltstone Production Facility: This week the contractor processed the first dissolved salt relating to Batch 1 (i.e., waste from tanks 49 and 23) of the deliquification, dissolution, and adjustment (DDA) process. Process runs early in the week were hampered by problems with the dry feed system. The silo containing the fly ash did not transfer the material at the necessary rate to sustain extended operations. During a subsequent 8 hour process run the facility operated satisfactorily.

Facility Walkdowns: Within the Tank Farms the Site Reps walked down the following facilities: Modular Caustic Side Solvent Extraction unit, Tank 37 high-level waste transfer line repair, an H-Tank Farm control room including observation of the initial transfer of dissolved salt to Saltstone, and the 299-H facility. During the 299-H walkdown, the Site Reps identified an inoperable pressure differential gauge for the facility ventilation. The Site Reps also observed Batch 1 processing at Saltstone and walked down the K-Area reactor building.

Tritium: The Tritium Facilities Documented Safety Analysis annual update was due in September 2006. The Savannah River Site Office (SRSO) refused to concur on the last two revisions of the Safety Basis Strategy and has provided notice that they intend to take back fee related to unsatisfactory performance on the annual update. In addition, SRSO has stated that the next submittal shall incorporate Specific Administrative Controls.

While attempting to cut a reservoir stem with a laser, an operator mistakenly shot a laser twice at one of the nearby studs on the reservoir instead.

Tank Farms: All three evaporators were operating this week for the first time since 2005.