

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 23, 2015

TO: S. A. Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: M. T. Sautman and D. L. Burnfield, Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Savannah River Site Weekly Report for Week Ending October 23, 2015

SRNS Operations: The operating status after six weeks of operational restriction is:

- HB-Line is still in an operational pause and will likely remain so until late November. This schedule is being driven by the weeks needed to complete a root cause analysis (RCA), a common cause analysis, and then to implement any resulting pre-start corrective actions.
- H-Canyon may enter deliberate operations sometime next week.
- K-Area began deliberate operations on Monday.
- All other SRNS nuclear facilities are in deliberate operations and may begin exiting deliberate operations in the second half of November or December.
- All SRNS program organizations are currently in deliberate operations and some may begin exiting this as early as next week.
- SRNS is preparing to issue their sustainment plan to improve operational performance.

While many instances of procedural improvements and opportunities for improving conduct of operations have been identified, the site reps have mixed feelings about the overall effort. The all-encompassing scope included some low value actions (e.g., stopping office trash pickup or repair of copy machines, deliberate operations for general counsel). Managers across the site are spending many hours in management review team meetings reviewing hundreds of management field observations or MFOs (e.g., HB-Line stated they have a backlog of 200 MFOs) of mostly low hazard activities. These MFOs are creating a huge wave of procedure change requests (PCR). For example, H-Canyon reports that they need to revise at least 500 procedures. Considering how few procedure writers are at SRS and how inadequate procedure validation has been a common problem in past events, trying to push this many changes through the system may be setting up future procedure quality issues. Addressing the lessons learned from the HB-Line RCA is a key corrective action, but the reality is that even after interviewing the workers involved in the event, nobody really knows how/why the group made certain decisions so some of the RCA is likely to be speculative. Suspending processes for weeks or months without using the down time to train, practice, and drill the workers may result in a loss of proficiency and equipment issues often occur when they are restarted after sitting idle. For example, HB-Line had just qualified four rotating shift crews on plutonium operations, but they had little opportunity to conduct any actual processing before the pause took effect.

Site Services: During a monthly surveillance of the H-Canyon credited diesels, the facility representative noted that Site Services personnel were using a “check sheet” to perform the surveillance rather than the use every time (UET) procedure. The check sheet was developed and approved for use by H-Canyon operations, engineering, and Site Services personnel and has been in use since 2010. HB-Line personnel continue to use the UET procedure for conduct of the diesel surveillance. The check sheet is listed as a “secondary procedure” in the database that identifies acceptable procedures for use. Site Services has an “alternate implementation method” in place that takes exception to the requirements contained in the site’s conduct of operations manual. While some clear deficiencies exist with the check sheet (e.g., the UET procedure has second person verification steps not contained in the check sheet, parts of the quality assurance hold points are also missing in the check sheets, and several warning/caution statements are missing), DOE and the contractor confirmed that the remainder of the check sheet meet the technical surveillance requirements.