

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 23, 2016

TO: S. A. Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: M. T. Sautman and Z. C. McCabe, Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Savannah River Site Weekly Report for Week Ending November 23, 2016

HB-Line: The site representative observed a drill simulating a belt breaking on a supply fan. Although this drill scenario has existed since 2005 and has been through nine revisions, there were inconsistencies amongst the scenario package, the operations manager, the drill controllers, and the DOE facility representative concerning what the desired/acceptable responses should be. Examples include whether the auxiliary operator should shut the fan down when he hears the banging noise or wait until he was directed to do so (in this case, it took 11 minutes from the first indicator), whether the shutdown of the fan should be conducted via the normal or abnormal operating procedure (AOP), and whether the AOP should have been entered for a planned task. The time to shut down the fan was partly delayed due to communication issues with the radio and the need to find an alternate means of communications. As seen in previous drills involving this scenario, the operators did not understand how the supply fan interlock worked when a fan was shut down. The above items were identified by drill controllers and observers. Management will be revising the scenario package and affected procedures and briefing the lessons learned in an upcoming training session.

SRNS Operations: The site representative reviewed overtime and staffing data since Technical Safety Requirements require that shift coverage shall be maintained without routine heavy use of overtime and overtime should be controlled in accordance with the site's Human Resources Manual. Shift Operations Manager retirements in F-Area resulted in management approving deviations from the overtime limitation requirements (i.e., no more than 72 hours of work in a 7-day period). These allowed a SOM to work 12-hour shifts on seven (thrice) or eight (once) days in a row. Some of the L-Area shift crews had persistent shortages of one to five operators. This mostly affected production since minimum staffing was maintained.

SRNS Training: The site representative met with training management to discuss initiatives for improving the training of operations staff. SRNS is developing system training courses and a qualification card that would address core knowledge that is applicable for all SRNS facilities. Once an operator completes their core qualifications, they might be able to start performing operator duties at the Waste Solidification Building, which is not operational, to develop proficiency while they are waiting for clearances and the completion of their facility-specific training. This generic qualification card would also make it easier to shift operations staff between facilities. Another initiative involves performing task analyses for each operations position and trying to integrate training and facility schedules so that operators-in-training can get more hands-on training on the tasks they need to know. SRNS has also revised their oral board instructions to incorporate lessons learned from past oral boards. Finally, in response to past Technical Safety Requirement (TSR) violations, SRNS has also developed draft guidelines for the content of training on TSR revisions. These guidelines should increase the focus on implementation.

Field Observations: The site representative observed K-Area personnel package and store down blended plutonium oxide in criticality control overpacks (CCOs). This completed the second evolution of the down blend process in K-Area. The site representative also observed operator rounds in the Tritium Extraction Facility.