

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 4, 2025

TO: Technical Director
FROM: Hanford Site Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Hanford Activity Report for the Week Ending April 4, 2025

DNFSB Staff Activity: A staff cognizant engineer was onsite for training and routine resident inspector oversight support.

Central Waste Complex: CPCCo completed their Root Cause Evaluation (RCE) for the fire suppression system technical safety requirement violation that occurred when the system was replaced and restored to operability without fully meeting National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) requirements (see 9/6/2024 report). The identified root cause was a failure to perform field verification to confirm compliance with NFPA requirements. A contributing cause related to inadequate work planning and execution documentation was also identified. The executive safety review board met and voted to approve the RCE after a thorough and thoughtful discussion.

Low Activity Waste (LAW) Facility: A resident inspector and cognizant engineer observed the contractor's ongoing efforts to integrate radiological controls (radcon) into work activities. Although there is no radiological material in the facility, WTCC must demonstrate these capabilities during the upcoming Management Self-Assessment. Radcon subject matter experts (SMEs) from other site contractors and HFO are supporting this effort. In discussions, HFO personnel expressed concerns that the small number of radiological planners may not be sufficient for initial development of procedures and work instructions used for routine operations, surveillances, and maintenance. Additionally, contractor SMEs have communicated a need for more prescriptive area setup procedures for complex, routinely performed jobs to ensure consistent radcon performance across shifts. The resident inspector notes that existing radcon procedures are designed to give radcon personnel flexibility when accomplishing their work. However, use of these procedures in the field has not consistently resulted in adequate area setup and preparation. Frequent work procedure changes, unavailable equipment, and workforce inexperience have also hampered efforts to improve radcon performance. The resident inspector also notes that operations and maintenance personnel still tend to treat radiological controls as something provided to them rather than something that requires ownership by all facility personnel. This has resulted in poor radcon housekeeping, workers skipping self-surveys when exiting the facility, and other similar issues, requiring proactive and time-consuming involvement from radcon technicians to establish expected performance levels.

Tank Farms: An H2C Plant Review Committee determined that proposed changes to the Tank Farms Documented Safety Analysis and Technical Safety Requirements, which clarify hazard controls for workers in tank pits that interface with the LAW Facility are ready to be sent to the DOE safety basis approval authority for approval. These changes address a concern the Board communicated to the Secretary of Energy in a letter dated February 28, 2023.

Hanford Site: Brian Harkins has been selected as Acting Deputy Manager for HFO. He replaces Brian Stickney, who retired on March 25, 2025 (see 3/28/2025 report).