

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 28, 2025

TO: Technical Director
FROM: Hanford Site Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Hanford Activity Report for the Week Ending March 28, 2025

Hanford Site: Brian Vance, the Hanford Site Manager, announced that he will resign from his position on April 24. Brian Stickney, the Hanford Site Deputy Manager, also retired this week. DOE has not yet announced who will succeed them in these roles.

Low-Activity Waste (LAW) Facility: The DOE has modified its strategy for LAW Facility completion. They will sequence the resolution of some conditions that only prevent the plant from reaching full production capability until after hot commissioning completion. Based on the change, they expect to complete readiness activities earlier, allowing them to achieve an operational status by the end of the fiscal year. WTCC has established and is working six primary criteria that must be completed prior to the start of the readiness reviews: (1) melters operational, (2) off-gas system tuned to treat nitrated feed, (3) capability to manually operate the canister lidding system, (4) Effluent Management Facility ready to support LAW Facility operations, (5) proficiency in radiological operations, and (6) nuclear safety requirements implemented and validated.

A resident inspector observed a coached emergency preparedness drill and an operations drill simulating responses to events in radiologically posted areas. Controllers for both drills were appropriately self-critical and identified areas for improvement in using personnel resources, communication, and controlling travel paths to minimize cross-contamination.

Tank Side Cesium Removal (TSCR) System: While reviewing and revising structural calculations to support a modification of the safety-significant enclosure for the TSCR system, H2C engineers determined that the calculation performed to show that the enclosure can fulfill its safety functions during natural phenomena hazard events did not correctly incorporate all load combinations required by the applicable consensus code. The H2C Plant Review Committee subsequently met and determined that the issue represents a potential inadequacy in the safety analysis. The TSCR system will remain in shutdown mode until H2C performs an unreviewed safety question determination, completes any required corrective action, and obtains DOE approval to lift the compensatory measure.

242-A Evaporator: Contractor personnel successfully resumed evaporator operations (see 3/21/2025 report). The campaign will be the first of several to recover tank space necessary to support tank farm retrieval and processing of high-level waste.

Central Waste Complex (CWC): Activities aimed at minimizing fire hazards associated with waste drums stored on wooden pallets continue to progress at CWC (see 12/8/2023 and 9/20/2024 reports). To date, 71 out of 552 wooden pallets have been replaced with metal pallets. For stacked drum arrays, 195 out of 552 wooden pallets have been relocated to single tier storage, where the risk of toppling during a fire has been eliminated. The facility estimates approximately 60 percent of the overall planned work effort has been completed.