

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 21, 2025

**TO:** Technical Director  
**FROM:** Savannah River Site Resident Inspectors  
**SUBJECT:** Savannah River Site Activity Report for Week Ending March 21, 2025

**H-Area Old Manufacturing (HAOM):** The resident inspector (RI) observed an emergency preparedness drill at HAOM. The scenario involved a vehicle impact leading to a fire, a radiological release, and injuries. The drill controllers set up the incident scene in a different location than described in the drill package. After the drill started, the controllers had to correct the information regarding where the incident took place after the first pre-packaged message arrived in the control room. The personnel involved at the incident scene moved away from the burning forklift but went in the opposite direction of where the incident command post was later set up upwind of the radiological release. This resulted in them later moving back toward the burning forklift to reach the incident command post, rather than taking a safer route further from the hazard. After the drill, the players were self-critical and identified areas for improvement. The RI also observed the controllers providing good coaching during and after the drill.

**Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL):** Personnel performed an annual surveillance requirement on the safety-significant central hood exhaust system (CHEX) by measuring exhaust flow rates for each lab. Test group personnel suspected some labs would be below the minimum exhaust flow rate after measuring the face velocity readings at the fume hoods. However, the test group needed to convert the readings, and in rooms with multiple hoods, they needed to calculate total airflow in the room before finalizing the report showing which labs passed or failed. Because the procedure usually takes several days to complete, operations did not receive and review the report until four days after the initiation of the surveillance. At that point, they determined that three of the labs had failed and notified the test engineer, entered the limiting conditions for operation (LCO) for the CHEX system, and barricaded the labs. The test group re-tested the three failed hoods, which passed, and operations personnel exited the LCO. During the issue investigation meeting, personnel discussed that the readings at the same hood can vary (e.g., depending on how the probe is held, or if equipment is blocking airflow). Management personnel questioned whether it was appropriate to consider a technical safety requirement surveillance satisfactory if, after a failed test, no changes are made but a single re-test results in a passing outcome. Personnel also discussed whether the procedure could be broken up into sections and the LCO entered sooner if issues are suspected. Personnel will hold a follow-up meeting to determine the necessary corrective actions.

**Surplus Plutonium Disposition (SPD) Project:** Following a series of construction and procurement issues on the SPD project (see 2/21/2025 report), the Savannah River Project Management Office issued a letter of concern to the contractor. SRNS established an independent oversight team and an executive integrated project team. The independent oversight team will assess the causal analysis process, identify organizational weaknesses, and provide feedback to the SPD project team, along with recommendations to the executive integrated project team. The executive integrated project team will oversee and direct organizational changes and has the final work release authority for all field work until further notice. Field work remains paused, with a few exceptions (e.g., rebar inspections).