

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 6, 2025

TO: Technical Director
FROM: Hanford Site Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Hanford Activity Report for the Week Ending June 6, 2025

Radiochemical Processing Laboratory (RPL): PNNL personnel held their annual emergency preparedness exercise at RPL, simulating a bomb threat, an explosion in a waste storage area, the discovery of a suspicious package, and the search for and recovery of a missing person that was contaminated. Notably, PNNL has constructed a new administrative building to support RPL, which includes a new incident command post area that was used for the first time in an annual exercise. Two resident inspectors observed the contractor's response to the event, including a full facility evacuation, segregation of potentially contaminated workers, and support for both a Hanford Fire Department and a Hanford Patrol response to the event. They noted improvements compared to other recent exercises at RPL, particularly in command and control and personnel accountability.

Central Waste Complex: While rearranging drum arrays, CWC personnel discovered fixed contamination on a drum containing mixed transuranic waste. The drum otherwise appeared to be in good condition. The workers responded appropriately, and surveys confirmed no contamination had spread. A recovery plan was developed. A resident inspector observed the recovery operation, which involved overpacking the affected drum. Radiological control personnel surveyed the other drums on the wooden pallet and found no additional contamination. Workers subsequently transferred these drums to a metal pallet. Overall, the operation was well executed.

Tank Farms: Tank Farms management discovered that minimum staffing was not met for several partial shifts because the qualifications of the on-watch Shift Manager had lapsed. Although the individual had completed all requirements, the qualifying official had not approved the requalification. This appeared to constitute a Technical Safety Requirement (TSR) violation. However, H2C management issued a retroactive qualification extension for the individual to avoid the violation. While the resident inspector agrees that the individual was trained and competent, they considered the issuance of a retroactive qualification extension inappropriate, as it represents a non-rigorous approach to fulfilling TSRs. The resident inspector discussed their concerns with HFO.

Liquid Effluent Retention Facility (LERF): While evaluating new information associated with LERF hazard controls, H2C nuclear safety personnel determined that the Documented Safety Analysis did not include the Industrial Hygiene Plan (IHP) as a safety management program, even though it is credited with protecting workers from chemical hazards. Consequently, they proposed a potential inadequacy in the safety analysis (PISA) to address the issue. Tank Farms management subsequently determined that, despite the incomplete safety basis coverage, the issue constituted an administrative error because the IHP was effectively implemented and the hazards were controlled. While this decision does not result in a significant safety concern, it does indicate a less rigorous posture for maintaining facility safety bases.