

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 18, 2025

**TO:** Technical Director  
**FROM:** Savannah River Site Resident Inspectors  
**SUBJECT:** Savannah River Site Activity Report for Week Ending July 18, 2025

**Staff Activity:** A member of the DNFSB staff was on site to augment the resident inspectors.

**Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF):** SRMC leadership personnel met with DNFSB resident inspectors and a staff member to discuss actions underway to improve operations at DWPF. These actions broadly align with the areas where additional efforts should be focused, as identified in a July 7, 2025, letter from the Board to DOE. SRMC has initiated organizational changes that should drive improved focus and accountability on training, disciplined operations, and the management of facility conditions. The contractor has assigned experienced leadership to address maintenance planning and conduct of maintenance and is implementing new shift routines to support crane maintenance area and contact decontamination and maintenance cell evolutions. SRMC has started the hiring process to support a reorganization of the training program. These and other actions are appropriate and necessary to drive further performance improvements at DWPF and indicate substantial management investment in the safe operation of this key facility.

**Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL):** The facility declared a Technical Safety Requirements (TSR) violation when they discovered Limiting Conditions for Operation (LCO) had not been performed as required. When the facility replaces prefilters in the central hood exhaust (CHEX) system, the opening of the prefilter housing door renders the CHEX ductwork inoperable. The CHEX system is relied upon for maintaining exhaust plenum pressures (i.e., airflow) for flammable gas control. The TSR requires personnel to immediately stop flammable gas cylinder supply and stop activities involving chemical reactions that are capable of generating flammable gas in the areas affected by the portion of the CHEX ductwork that is inoperable. The procedure for prefilter changeout has a step for the shift operations manager (SOM) to evaluate entry into the LCO, and they were advised by engineering to enter the LCO. At the issue investigation, the SOM stated that they believed the entry into the LCO was just a precaution and did not understand that the portion of the CHEX system would be considered inoperable during the prefilter replacement, and personnel did not perform the LCO immediate actions. The issue was discovered by engineering personnel while preparing for upcoming prefilter replacements and upon reviewing previously completed procedures. After the issue was discovered, the facility confirmed that the ventilation flow was adequate through the CHEX system and issued a standing order to stop all prefilter changeouts until corrective actions have been put in place. Revision 3 of the TSR, which contains the new CHEX ductwork operability requirement and LCO action if the ductwork is inoperable, was implemented in August 2024. Facility personnel performed an extent-of-condition review that discovered two times where the prefilter changeout procedure was performed earlier in the year. According to the logbooks, the SOMs on shift had authorized the work without entering the required LCO. The facility will perform a root cause analysis.