

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 6, 2026

TO: Technical Director
FROM: Idaho National Laboratory (INL) Cognizant Engineer
SUBJECT: INL Report for January 2026

DNFSB Staff Activity. The cognizant engineer held weekly meetings to maintain awareness of site activities, including attending event fact findings, management reviews, integrated project team reviews, and facility plan of the day meetings, as applicable.

Idaho Cleanup Project (ICP)/Idaho Environmental Coalition (IEC) – Project Evaluation Board (PEB) Annual Lockout/Tagout (LOTO) Assessment. The PEB team conducted an annual LOTO assessment of the IEC 2025 Annual and Semi-Annual Assessment of their LOTO Program to determine its effectiveness. The PEB team reviewed LOTO record sheets from all facilities, interviewed LOTO-qualified individuals, observed field activities, and inspected LOTO locks and lockboxes. Personnel interviews focused on the differences in implementation across each project and the overall level of knowledge of the employees. The PEB team identified several areas for improvement, particularly in procedural compliance and general conduct of operations. Recommended actions included additional training to reinforce LOTO requirements and more frequent communication of lessons learned related to LOTO program implementation. The PEB team concluded overall that IEC continues to maintain a healthy and compliant LOTO program and that qualified personnel are knowledgeable regarding the LOTO process.

Integrated Waste Treatment Unit (IWTU) – Radiological Contamination Event. During installation of the Process Gas Filter (PGF) head on January 7, 2026, a portion of the contamination control wrap became detached from the PGF head due to the differential pressure created by ventilation flow in the PGF. IWTU operations returned the PGF head to its staging area. The operator who had guided the PGF head in-cell removed the contamination wrap from the top of the PGF and exited the work area safely. However, upon exit, the personnel contamination monitor alarmed, which indicated contamination on the operator's clothing. Radiological Control Technicians (RCTs) promptly removed the operator's clothing and surveyed the operator to confirm no further external contamination on the individual. RCTs detected no contamination outside the established contamination control areas. As a precaution, a bioassay was conducted. Personnel adhered to their training throughout the event, and lessons learned are being developed to prevent recurrence. Notably, contamination levels on the operator did not meet reporting thresholds.

Integrated Waste Treatment Unit (IWTU) Update. IWTU has been in shutdown mode for PGF and Carbon Reduction Reformer troubleshooting and maintenance since July 2025. IWTU entered the current outage in July shortly after coming out of a previous outage to replace broken filter elements. IWTU personnel have now successfully replaced all 18 PGF filter bundles without contamination spread or significant personnel radiological exposure. Notably, personnel exposure significantly decreased across all three 2025 outages, despite PGF dose rates being 3 to 10 times higher than in previous outages. This reduction was credited to application of lessons learned, incorporation of remote tools, and improved processes. IEC personnel completed decontamination and removal of the PGF radiological enclosure and released the facility LOTO on January 19, 2026, to end the outage. With the LOTO removed, IWTU personnel are preparing for startup and will begin heating up in February, targeting radiological operations in March.