

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 5, 2017

TO: Steven Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: Anthony Battaglia, WIPP Cognizant Engineer
SUBJECT: Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Report for March 2017

DNFSB Staff Activity: A. Martin and M. Forsbacka were at the contractor's parent company for a safety integration team meeting on the Permanent Ventilation System March 1-2. A. Battaglia was onsite conducting routine oversight during March 13-17. J. Pasko and B. Weathers observed the National TRU Program (NTP) Basis of Knowledge Workshop held at the Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) during March 14-15. R. Quirk was onsite conducting routine oversight March 20-24. A. Martin and M. Forsbacka were onsite March 21-23 to discuss the 90% comment resolution meeting on the Permanent Ventilation System at CBFO. Staff oversight during FY-2017 has averaged 3.9 person-weeks/month.

Waste Shipments. A readiness review was conducted for NTP to confirm ability to effectively execute the suite of responsibilities described in Chapter 18 of the WIPP Documented Safety Analysis. The readiness review identified three pre-start findings that must be completed prior to shipments of waste to WIPP. Initial shipments to WIPP will be from Waste Acceptance Criteria compliant waste streams that do not contain any oxidizers. The shipments are expected to resume in April. The Board's staff is reviewing ongoing NTP process changes and confirming that the pre-shipment findings are closed prior to initial shipments to WIPP.

Technical Safety Requirements. During underground ventilation system configuration changes made in preparation for a planned electrical outage, the operator in the CMR failed to notice an alarm for the confinement ventilation system (CVS) for the WHB. The CVS for CH Bay of the WHB is safety significant and the alarm is associated with an inadequate differential pressure between the inside of the building and the outside. This alarm was noticed by the oncoming shift, but they determined that required actions for the LCO condition were not completed within the 60-minute completion time and declared a TSR violation.

The contractor uses a combination of a spreadsheet/board and operator knowledge/skill to determine when surveillances need to be performed. The facility compliance procedure which specifies the requirements for performing the TSR surveillances does not provide specific requirements for tracking completion times and performance. This has caused one TSR violation for a missed surveillance when the spreadsheet on the computer froze and needed to be rebooted. There is no formal control for tracking the completion times and performance of TSR surveillances.

Ground Control. The contractor has continued to bolt and perform routine ground control activities in the contaminated areas and the transport path. The contractor has met their bolting goal of 110 bolts/week only one time this past month.