

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

September 6, 2019

TO: Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director
FROM: M. T. Sautman and Z. C. McCabe Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Savannah River Site Activity Report for Week Ending September 6, 2019

Salt Waste Processing Facility: DOE provided Parsons their comments on the July 17 emergency preparedness exercise (see 7/18/19 report). DOE stated that “while most of the major objectives were rated as “Met” this shift did not demonstrate proficiency and would benefit from being provided with “focused training” and conducting the exercise again.” In a subsequent letter, DOE stated that “to date, all evaluated drills are judged by DOE to be unacceptable due to repetitive deficiencies that Parsons management continues to fail to effectively address.” These deficiencies include radiation control, command and control, command post and incident scene coordination, coordination with fire department, etc. The resident inspector (RI) observed the field response during a proficiency drill this week. Compared to the last two proficiency drills (see 8/15 and 8/30/19 reports), the performance by the radiological control first line manager (FLM) and technicians was significantly improved. They took precautions at the incident scene and while undressing fire department and facility workers to minimize the spread of contamination. Controllers were also diligent in keeping track of what personal protective equipment had contacted contaminated surfaces and providing appropriate contamination readings. Coordination between SWPF and the Fire Department was also improved.

Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL): SRNL personnel have continued to investigate the incorrect installation of a glovebox glove by two technicians, one of which was not qualified and using the evolution as their practical factor (prac-fac) evaluation (see 8/30/19 report). According to the discussion and timeline presented during an issue review, the FLM and technicians discussed that this would be a training evolution before the pre-job brief. SRNL personnel stated that the plan was for the trainee to perform the first few glove changes (of the ten in total) under instruction from the qualified individual and then the FLM would pause the evolution, retrieve the prac-fac documentation and then begin the evaluation of the trainee. However, the RI attended the pre-job brief and observed the evolution, the discussion regarding the recovery from the error, and the post-job review and was unaware of these facts until the issue review this week. Additionally, SRNL personnel said that a task preview had been performed previously, but were unable to state when. In the RI’s opinion, the quality of the issue review suffered for several reasons. First, SRNL management who were not present for the evolution provided the description and details rather than allowing those actually involved in the evolution to speak for themselves. Second, the timeline that was provided and discussed at the issue review was not accurate. Third, a significant portion of the discussion regarding the corrective actions focused on revising the procedure, which was not used, and the prac-fac documentation, which was not in hand at the time of the error. SRNL personnel are planning to have another meeting to discuss corrective actions further.

Technical Safety Requirements (TSR): The RI and DNFSB headquarters staff discussed SRS guidance on TSR violations and past TSR occurrence reports with DOE-SR, NNSA, SRNS, and SRR. Topics included time of discovery, operator cognizance of TSR actions, and documentation of entry/exit of limiting conditions for operation. This is part of a larger review.