

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 8, 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 November 8, 2019

Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF): SRR commenced their Readiness Assessment (RA) for the DWPF support for the initial startup of the Salt Waste Processing Facility (SWPF). The resident inspectors observed two dry runs, a conduct of operations drill involving a leak during a transfer through the Low Point Pump Pit between SWPF and H-Area Tank Farms, and level of knowledge interviews of operations and management personnel. The RA is scheduled to be complete early next week.

Saltstone: The subcontractor building Saltstone Disposal Unit 7 had a near miss. Workers were disassembling a shoring tower (4' X 2' base) used to support the roof shoring structure by having a forklift lift the tower while workers disassembled the bottom section. After removing the bottom section, the forklift was lowering the tower when it tipped over and fell on its side. At the time, the tower was 36' high and weighed approximately 700 lbs. The tower was sitting on the forklift tines with no other tools or ropes used to secure the tower or keep it upright. No workers were injured by the tower. The workers had not signed the Task Specific Plan, which did not include this method for disassembling towers. Since there are hundreds of similar or larger towers inside the tank that need to be disassembled, work has been stopped until better tools and/or methods are put in place and workers are briefed on the hazards and controls.

In preparation of a load center outage, power to Z-Area was shut down and workers installed a lockout. Afterwards, worker installed temporary modifications to provide lighting to a process and administrative building via a portable diesel generator. However, these two efforts were not well integrated and workers later found that the temporary modifications had also inadvertently provided power to equipment inside the lockout boundary. The workers stopped all activities in the area, conducted an investigation, and performed an extent of condition. In past outages, Z-Area personnel did not attempt to install temporary lighting.

Solid Waste Management Facility (SWMF): SWMF personnel are planning to make an entry into the Intermediate Level Tritium Vault (ILTV) to retrieve five B-6 waste containers the waste generator has requested to be returned. The ILTV is a partially subsurface vault only accessible from the top that is designed to contain tritium bearing waste. The ILTV that is not routinely entered by personnel, and according to SWMF personnel the last entry was approximately 20 years ago. Two pairs of individuals will enter the ILTV on separate manlifts to retrieve the waste containers that were placed sporadically in the ILTV approximately six months ago. The radiological dose rate is expected to be low for the personnel entering the ILTV with the exception of the retrieval of one of the containers. Said container is on top of another waste box that had previously been measured at 250 mrem/hr at 30 centimeters. Thus, the area will be treated as a high radiation area and controlled as such. During the performance, the SRS Fire Department will be standing by at the ILTV because the container retrieval evolution will be a confined space entry. SWMF personnel with support from Tritium personnel are planning to perform the evolution next week.