

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

January 31, 2020

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 January 31, 2020

Tritium Facilities: The resident inspector observed an initial oral board for a shift operations manager position. The board presented the candidate with a scenario involving an upset condition during open glovebox maintenance. The Technical Safety Requirements (TSR) utilize a specific administrative control to prevent personnel from entering the room during open glovebox maintenance during the scenario described. When asked if someone entering the room in this scenario would be a TSR violation, the candidate incorrectly answered that it would not violate the TSRs. Despite the candidate not recognizing this scenario as a violation, none of the three individuals on the board failed the candidate in the safety basis portion of the exam. Although there is no requirement to fail a candidate for violating the TSRs during an oral board, it is common practice. Further the resident inspectors routinely observe oral boards for key positions and are unable to recall another single instance where a SOM, shift technical engineer, or shift manager passed an oral board when they violated a TSR or failed to recognize a violation. The resident inspector discussed this observation with SRNS senior management who are planning to discuss it further. Beyond the incorrect answer discussed above, the candidate was knowledgeable of the facility, safety basis, operations, and emergency response.

K-Area: As part of the ongoing outage for optimization of the plutonium down blending activities in the K-Area Interim Surveillance Vault, K-Area personnel began open glovebox maintenance this week. K-Area personnel have successfully removed the panel, old can cutter, and other large items; installed (hand tightened) the wing cabinet with the hydraulic press to the glovebox; and are in the process of reconfiguring the glovebox ventilation system. This is the first time this type of evolution glovebox has been opened in this manner.

Salt Waste Processing Facility: DOE-SR completed their affirmations of readiness of the core requirements. The remaining open items from past DOE assessments are either being closed, added to the manageable issues list, or having their closure deferred until hot operations or later. Parsons has closed all the prestart findings from the contractor Operational Readiness Review (ORR) except for one. Parsons also provided DOE a list of 19 open issues and their schedule for closure, some of which go through April 15. The DOE ORR is scheduled to begin on Monday.

F/H Laboratory: During a glovebox waste cut, the bag-out bag tore and two glovebox high-efficiency particulate air filters fell out of the bag, onto the table below, and then onto the floor. Each of the filters had been wrapped with an absorbent pad and used glovebox gloves to protect sharp filter edges. The workers were wearing two pairs of anti-contamination clothing and fresh air hoods. One filter contacted and contaminated a worker's outer coveralls. Airborne radioactivity did not exceed the fresh air hood's suspension guide, but floor contamination exceeded the instrument range of one million dpm alpha (and thus the radiation work permit's suspension guide). Workers exited the plastic hut safely. Based on worker feedback, the bag-out bag is being redesigned and management is reviewing the response for lessons learned.