

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 24, 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 April 24, 2020

COVID-19: The contractors submitted the draft Savannah River Site Recovery Plan – Return to Normal Operations from the COVID-19 Pandemic Event to DOE-SR. DOE is providing comments. In addition, the contractors developed their more detailed facility/organization-specific Management Control Plans (MCP), collected feedback on them from their workers, and started approving them. Meanwhile, SRS personnel are working to integrate these local plans with Office of Personnel Management guidelines and the draft Environmental Management headquarters’ framework. DOE is also monitoring documented COVID-19 cases and the prevalence of positive tests for Georgia, South Carolina, and the eight local counties since a 14-day downward regional trend is one of the required gating criteria for transitioning to phase one.

The Recovery Plans and MCPs include criteria and actions to be completed beforehand, the sequencing of actions, and lists of topics to be evaluated for impacts (e.g., proficiency, Technical Safety Requirements, facility systems). The proposed controls are typical COVID-19 controls such as social distancing, temperature monitoring, and face coverings. The Surplus Plutonium Disposition resumed work in accordance with their MCP.

Tritium: On January 17, 2020, SRNS submitted a safety basis implementation plan (SBIP) to NNSA-SRFO for the combined tritium facilities safety basis (approved by NNSA-SRFO in December 2019). In addition to combining all of the Savannah River Tritium Enterprise nuclear facilities into a single safety basis, the safety basis corrects long-standing (since 2010) issues with the atmospheric dispersion modeling and non-conservative meteorological data used in the dose consequence calculations. The safety basis also includes new controls cited by NNSA as part of the reason for the rejection of Board Recommendation 19-2. According to the schedule included in the SBIP, the safety basis will not be fully implemented until 2025, and they are planning to request funding for one of the upgrade projects in Fiscal Year 2023. NNSA-SRFO has yet to provide feedback on the SBIP.

Recommendation 2012-1: DOE approved the revisions to the Basis for Interim Operations and Technical Safety Requirements. DOE considers this to be the last action they needed to complete for the Recommendation.

H-Canyon: To support adding recycled water to a canyon vessel, H-Canyon personnel were tasked with removing a blank from wall nozzle 30-16H. However, operations personnel identified that the blank for the nozzle was still in place during a task preview for the water addition procedure performance and informed operations management. Investigation after the fact identified that a work planning error resulted in H-Canyon personnel removing the blank from wall nozzle 33-16H instead of 30-16H. This task was performed using an approved work package and lockout for wall nozzle 33-16H, which were developed to support work planned for later this year. SRNS personnel determined that communication issues were the likely cause and are in the process of determining compensatory measures to avoid similar errors in the future.