

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 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 July 24, 2020

COVID-19: The number of employees with positive tests increased from 131 to 183. Over the last four weeks, the number of new cases per week has been increasing – rising from 14 to 21 to 44 and most recently 54. The resident inspector observed a virtual emergency preparedness (EP) drill. The drill was similar to a tabletop drill, but many of the controllers and the observers participated remotely. There were some lessons learned from its conduct, but this approach showed promise at a time when social distancing makes some EP scenarios difficult to conduct.

Technical Safety Requirements (TSR) Minimum Staffing: The minimum staffing requirements found in many TSRs ensure that there are sufficient staff to perform the required actions for Limiting Conditions for Operation within the completion time. Facilities also ensure they have sufficient staff to fill their emergency response organization positions. The shift operations manager (SOM) typically assumes the role of the area/facility emergency coordinator and is the key individual for ensuring facilities operate in accordance with their TSRs. Last week, five of the seven qualified SOMs at a defense nuclear facility were unavailable. In order to meet the minimum shift crew composition, a shift manager (a first line manager who reports to a SOM) stood watch in the SOM role, which is allowed by the facility's TSRs. Another nuclear facility is actively training a new SOM because three of the facility's qualified SOMs are not available. Last month, a third defense nuclear facility changed the facility's TSR mode in order to address a staffing shortage.

F-Area: Last week, a several foot long section of an underground firewater line ruptured during a test, resulting in a large volume of water being discharged until workers were able to isolate a section of the underground firewater header. This resulted in several fire impairments to the wet pipe sprinkler systems at F/H Laboratory and its support buildings. Fire patrols are being performed twice per shift until the repair is complete. The repair was delayed when an electrical duct bank was found during excavation in close proximity to the firewater pipe. This duct was not expected since it was not on the drawing initially being used. Later in the week, engineers determined that the duct was deactivated and repairs resumed.

L-Area: L-Area began their management self-assessment (MSA) of two evolutions in the Disassembly Basin, vertical fuel bundle transportation and loading, and cleaning High-Flux Isotope Reactor cores in the resin affected zone. To limit duplicative demonstrations by operations personnel, the implementation verification review (IVR) team also observed the field evolutions along with the MSA team. However, since the IVR is intended to be an independent effort and the official start is not until August (after the facility declares their readiness), the IVR team has not been providing feedback on their observations. The resident inspector also observed these evolutions.

Salt Waste Processing Facility: DOE is reviewing the closure evidence that Parsons submitted to address the pre-start findings from the DOE Operational Readiness Review.