

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

September 18, 2020

TO: Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director
FROM: M. T. Sautman, Resident Inspector
SUBJECT: Savannah River Site Activity Report for Week Ending September 18, 2020

Oral Board: The resident inspectors (RI) discussed recent oral board observations with NNSA operations and Savannah River Tritium Enterprise (SRTE) training and operations management. Two weeks ago, a member of operations management failed the nuclear safety portion of their requalification oral board when they did not enter a limiting condition for operation (LCO) due to a failed surveillance requirement (a Technical Safety Requirement (TSR) violation). The candidate also did not declare a TSR violation when presented with a scenario where minimum staffing requirements were not achieved. That facility's TSRs state that a failure to comply with minimum staffing requirements is a TSR violation. Remediation consisted of self-study and a discussion with a shift technical engineer. This week, a RI observed the candidate's re-board on nuclear safety, but there was no evidence that remediation was effective. When presented with a similar TSR minimum staffing scenario, the candidate correctly switched from operations to standby mode. However, the candidate incorrectly stated that the TSR minimum staffing requirements did not apply in standby mode although they actually apply to all modes. The candidate never declared a TSR violation despite repeated requests for clarification and even reading the TSR staffing requirements and mode applicability out loud from the TSRs. Only one of the three board members failed the candidate, but they changed their grade after input from the other board members. Several months ago in response to the RIs raising a similar concern, SRNS issued a memo stating that a TSR violation would result in an instant failure. SRTE stated that they will clarify a failure would result from a candidate causing a TSR violation or failing to recognize a TSR violation. The RI also noted an instance where one of the individuals performing the role of a board committee member (i.e., asking questions and grading) was not qualified to do so. Rather, the individual was under the supervision of another qualified person observing the oral board. The SRNS oral board instructions do not allow for this practice. Due to a large influx of workers, SRTE is conducting several oral boards a week. The RIs are concerned with the inconsistent conduct and grading of oral boards by SRTE.

Facility Layup: DOE put HB-Line into a reversible layup condition due to the end of its processing mission. DOE is in the process of moving the analytic capabilities in F/H Laboratory to the Savannah River National Laboratory. The RIs visited both facilities to see the current condition, see the status of safety and support systems, and discuss staffing. HB-Line has already transitioned to having the shift operations manager and operators work only on weekday day shift and F/H Laboratory will eventually switch to that. At HB-Line, the RI also inspected how SRNS is using a camera to allow HB-Line control room alarms to be remotely monitored by an H-Canyon operator on nights and weekends. At both facilities, workers removed the contents of gloveboxes and hoods and swept/wiped the interiors clean, but decontamination will not happen until deactivation. Portions of HB-Line are still airborne radioactivity areas, especially those rooms where Pu-238 was handled. They are installing blanks in most glovebox ports although a few gloves will remain in some HB-Line gloveboxes. In both facilities, much of the safety significant equipment is being downgraded to general service and the associated LCOs eliminated. Fire systems will continue to be tested and maintained per code requirements.