

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 25, 2021

TO: Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director
FROM: Z. C. McCabe Resident Inspector
SUBJECT: Savannah River Site Activity Report for Week Ending June 25, 2021

Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL): Battelle Savannah River Alliance (BSRA) has assumed operation of SRNL.

High Radiation Areas (HRAs): The resident inspector walked down the physical controls implemented by various facilities at SRS to prevent unauthorized access to HRAs. The types of controls utilized to prevent unauthorized access vary widely across SRS. Some of the controls include key-controlled locked doors, chain link fencing with padlocks, a metal plate locked in place preventing access to a ladder, flexible plastic “chicken wire” and zip ties, yellow and magenta rope inside a controlled room, and plastic fencing and zip ties. None of the HRAs the RI walked down were greater than or equal to 1 rem/hr at 30 centimeters. During one walkdown, the RI and area Radiological Protection Department (RPD) manager both noted that the dose rate posted on the HRA sign did not reflect the most up-to-date dose rate. Additionally, two RPD area maps posted in the facility with dose rates were also not up-to-date. The RPD manager documented this as a finding in a management field observation. The following day, the manager confirmed that the postings had been updated to reflect the most recent radiological dose rates.

Saltstone Disposal Unit 7 (SDU 7): SRR personnel have declared readiness for SDU 7 this week after closing out the six pre-start findings from the contractor readiness assessment. The DOE-SR readiness assessment began Friday with personnel interviews and is expected to continue into next week.

Tritium Extraction Facility (TEF): TEF has entered the extraction window for the second of several times planned for this year with only one operating glovebox stripper system blower. The facility remains under a standing order requiring senior supervisory oversight during critical portions of the evolution. The resident inspector observed a portion of the pre-job brief where TEF personnel and the senior observers discussed the response to a hypothetical failure of the remaining blower. In addition, TEF personnel discussed the fact that this was the first time for one of the operators to perform this task and assigned a more experienced person to provide additional support during the evolution.

The resident inspector observed a re-qualification oral evaluation for a shift operations manager. The topical areas included in the questions reflected past lessons learned and feedback.

Evaporators: With the recent approval and implementation of the Evaluation of the Safety of the Situation contribution of flammable gases from the evaporator pot into the cell via the non-condensable vent line, Tank Farms was able to resume evaporator operations this week. The 2H evaporator has resumed operations. However, the 3H evaporator restart is delayed due to a mechanical issue.