

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 9, 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: J. S. Contardi/M.T. Sautman, SRS Site Representatives
SUBJECT: SRS Report for Week Ending February 9, 2007

Solid Waste Management Facility: Two transuranic waste drums exhibit bulging indicative of internal pressures greater than 8 psi. The Site Rep pointed out that the Response Plan for venting these drums stated that a deflagration of a drum pressurized above 6 psi could challenge the structural integrity of the venting and purging cabinet “resulting in flying shrapnel.” However, the plan did not discuss how it would protect the two workers who will initiate this venting from a nearby control room from this shrapnel. The facility is evaluating whether shrapnel would actually be produced or whether pressure would be relieved through the exhaust duct. This venting might still pose a risk to the workers since it could blow out the nearby high efficiency particulate air filters and possibly affect the control room glass windows in front of the exhaust.

Walkdowns: The Site Reps walked down the contamination areas located at H-Canyon outside facilities and the canyon exhaust fan house with the Radiation Control Manager and operations representatives to understand the current need for these areas. (Site Rep weekly 1/5/07). Several of these legacy contamination areas had already been targeted for rollback by the facility. After a Site Rep walkdown of the Receiving Basin for Off-Site Fuel Cask Pad identified a number of housekeeping issues, waste, laundry, and old tools were removed and a yoke was rewrapped in plastic. The Site Reps also walked down P Reactor, which was turned over to the deactivation and decommissioning organization this week. Preparations have started to improve the habitability of this inactive facility in order to support deactivation and equipment removal this year.

Plutonium Operations: The contractor recently responded to concerns raised by the Site Rep relating to the safety basis for the K-Area Interim Surveillance project (Site Rep weekly 1/12/07). The response included several page changes to the Documented Safety Analysis, including the addition of two new accident scenarios, a new specific administrative control, and improved functional requirement descriptions. Clarifications were also added to improve consistency and justify the reliance on administrative controls for facility worker protection. The responses adequately address the Site Rep’s concerns.

Recovery of Tank 48: This week the Site Reps met with representatives from DOE and the contractor to discuss plans to recover Tank 48. Initially, the contractor intended to limit the material at risk such that the steam reforming portion of the facility would be hazard category (HC) 3. Recently, the contractor has elected to change the HC to 2 such that segmentation would not need to be protected. The change would also allow greater processing flexibility.

Liquid Waste: Both the 3H evaporator and saltstone operated briefly this week before shutting down to address equipment issues. This was the first time the evaporator has operated in nearly a year.