

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 7, 2008

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: R. Quirk and W. Linzau, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Activity Report for the Week Ending March 7, 2008

Office of River Protection (ORP): A team from the DOE Office of Operations Oversight (EM-62) was on-site to assess the ORP oversight program and the Tank Farms contractor's conduct of operations and work control processes. The team's preliminary observations included: the ineffective implementation of a S-102 spill commitment to perform more off-shift and mid-shift work observations by facility representatives (FRs) and management; a lack of qualified safety system oversight engineers; the inappropriate and/or premature closure of items in the DOE corrective action tracking system; inadequate knowledge of Technical Safety Requirements demonstrated by shift managers; and ineffective implementation of planned work. The inability to complete planned work resulted in the team members not being able to observe field work, which is the same observation made during a site rep conduct of operations review (see Hanford Activity Report 11/9/2007).

DOE Headquarters approved the reorganization of ORP, which is intended to improve oversight. The new organizational chart notes 34 vacancies, most of which are new and almost all are for technical personnel.

Waste Treatment Plant (WTP): The site rep discussed the ORP WTP Engineering Division assessment program with ORP management. The site rep noted, during a review of assessment plans dating back to November 2007, a lack of detailed design reviews of facility systems and little focus on nuclear safety. The assessments often focused on the ability of the facilities to provide the contract-required capacity and throughput, or were largely reviews of the programs. None of the assessments included reviews of the safety basis implementation at the component level.

An example of the programmatic reviews conducted by ORP was an assessment of the contractor's Criticality Safety Program (CSP). The assessment noted a lack of a formal method for CSP staff to work with system engineers to address criticality safety requirements. In addition, the assessment report noted the absence of training and qualifications required by DOE Order 420.1A, and the lack of formal management assessments of the CSP.

The site rep conducted a walkdown of the WTP construction site and discussed the use of cathodic protection of the buried waste transfer lines with the DOE FR (see Hanford Activity Report 12/07/07). The FR reported that the contractor plans to have cathodic protection of the permanent waste transfer lines operational in 2009.

River Corridor Closure Project: The site rep met with Richland Operations Office (RL) personnel to discuss the contractor response to the event involving mercury stabilization at the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility (see Hanford Activity Report 2/22/08). The FR team lead noted a significant weakness in the contractor's use of the existing site incident command structure.