

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 8, 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: M. P. Duncan and M. T. Sautman, SRS Site Representatives
SUBJECT: SRS Report for Week Ending February 8, 2008

Transportation: DOE-SR will now formally approve all new and revised routine and non-routine transportation safety analyses, but does not plan to review and approve the 12 existing documents unless an upcoming limited assessment indicates that this is warranted. DOE-SR will consider adding a time limit to how long this condition will be allowed. (See June 8 and 15, 2007 weekly reports.)

F-Canyon: While preparing to bag out pre-filters from the Transuranic Waste Repackaging Enclosure, count rate meters alarmed. Workers safely evacuated when an air sampler indicated 13,000 Derived-Air-Concentration-hours of airborne radioactivity, which exceeded the suspension guide for fresh air hoods. The next day, workers wearing plastic suits found a hole in the bag, possibly caused by debris in the bag rubbing against a portable ladder being used as a stand. The hole was covered and the process area decontaminated. A mockup will be used to ensure that all crews are using best practices for bagouts. Stronger bags are also being evaluated.

H-Canyon: Contamination was found on a box, which contained failed canyon equipment, that had been stored in an outside Radioactive Material Area since November. Subsequent surveys found a highly contaminated spot (20,000 dpm alpha) on the trailer it was sitting on. A single layer of tape, which had partially fallen off, appears to have allowed contamination to escape from the box. The contamination was covered with plastic. Management is evaluating better methods to seal similar boxes and protect them from the weather.

Tank 11: During the transfer of aluminum-rich supernate from tank 51 to 11, a conductivity probe alarmed in the annulus and the transfer was terminated. Subsequent camera inspections of the annulus and sampling of the liquid (pH, contamination) determined that it was rainwater intrusion. After preheated air was used to evaporate the liquid to below the probe height and the number of cameras in the annulus was doubled, the transfer was authorized to resume.

235-F: DOE-SR approved an action plan that laid out a schedule for defining the desired end state of 235-F, completing the deactivation and decommissioning authorization basis, identifying options to address the risk from the stack, and reducing the combustible loading. Funding will need to be approved for implementing the recommendations.

Tank Farms: The contractor intends to combine F Tank Farms and eight old-style tanks in H Tank Farms (i.e., tanks 9 - 16) into a single Tank Farm Closure Project. Not only would the operations and engineering staff be integrated, but the alarm monitoring for these eight H Tank Farms tanks would be transferred to the control room at F Tank Farms. One challenge will be providing a timely emergency response for tanks 9 - 16 despite the physical separation.