

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 5, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: J. S. Contardi/M.T. Sautman, SRS Site Representatives
SUBJECT: SRS Report for Week Ending May 5, 2006

Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL): The Transuranic Drum Remediation Project Readiness Assessment (RA) team concluded that SRNL is not yet ready to remediate radioactive waste. The team believes additional management presence is required during field operations to mentor/coach and reinforce standards associated with disciplined operations and radiological controls. Furthermore, development and training on appropriate response procedures consistent with the facility design are required to avoid the potential spread of contamination. Sixteen of the 26 findings (e.g., inadequate procedures, procedure compliance) require pre-start corrective actions. During a RA drill, the Site Rep noticed that the interlocked truck bay roll-up doors were bypassed for 20-30 minutes despite postings that stated that one door must be closed at all times. Facility representatives pursued this issue with facility management with the result that the shift manager will now control the interlock bypass key and new guidance will be issued.

H-Canyon: A Technical Safety Requirement function test was performed on the incorrect evaporator because the wrong data sheet was in the work package. A contributing factor was the technicians' lack of familiarity with the arrangement of the hot and warm sides of the canyon. Appropriate corrective actions were developed to help prevent recurrence of the event.

Radiological Hood Operations: The Site Rep and DOE staff met with the contractor to discuss the lack of radiological action levels for hood operations and how work is stopped when abnormal events occur (Site Rep weekly 4/14/06). The contractor is evaluating this concern.

Personnel Contamination: While exiting a radiological buffer area (RBA), a worker was determined to have contamination under his finger nail. The worker had been walking down F-Canyon as part of deactivation and decommissioning (D&D) work, which included hanging signs on various valves. Although the area was posted as an RBA, facility personnel were aware that the area was prone to changing radiological conditions. Unfortunately miscommunication between facility and D&D personnel led to a misunderstanding of what work is allowed during a facility walkdown. Therefore, no radiological personnel protective equipment was worn.

Plutonium-238 Standards: As a result of nuclear material packaging failures at the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) (see LANL Site Rep weekly 12/23/05), HB-Line personnel began radiographing several legacy Pu-238 standards. Radiographs of two containers indicate the potential for a pressurized inner container. In response, facility personnel have bagged the two containers and are developing a path forward to introduce the items into a glovebox line for further inspection. The standards contain approximately 50 and 100 curies of Pu-238 oxide.

Tritium: The Site Reps walked down the upgraded hydraulic-burst test apparatus in the H-Area Old Manufacturing and Reservoir Reclamation facilities that are used to measure mechanical properties of certain reservoir types. Readiness preparations and safety controls were reviewed.