

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 14, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: M.T. Sautman, SRS Site Representative
SUBJECT: SRS Report for Week Ending July 14, 2006

Radiological Control: Unexpectedly high contamination was found on the arm sleeve of a worker's anti-contamination clothing after he repackaged transuranic waste in the Modular Repackaging System at the Solid Waste Management Facility. When the source of the contamination could not be found, it was assumed to be residual contamination from last week's continuous air monitor alarm. Work resumed the next morning even though the critique had not been held yet. While the critique was in progress, another operator working in the same glovebox glove found contamination on his arm sleeve due to a hole in the glove. This second event was preventable since it had already been decided at the critique to replace this glove. After the Site Rep questioned the wisdom of resuming work prior to conducting a critique and identifying corrective actions, the facility decided to determine the expectations for resuming work and conducting critiques. A third worker received a skin contamination at the Defense Waste Processing Facility while working around a sealand container full of contaminated equipment.

F/H Laboratory: The 772-1F facility was temporarily evacuated when questions were raised whether a container of collodion (5% nitrocellulose, 60-70% ethyl ether, 22-26% ethyl alcohol) could form shock-sensitive peroxides due to its age. A Potential Inadequacy in the Safety Analysis was later declared. While there is conflicting information regarding the stability of this compound, vendor-recommended testing of inhibitor concentration was not being performed.

Savannah River National Laboratory: The Site Rep met with fire department and laboratory personnel to discuss their corrective actions to address the significant weaknesses with command and control and mitigation during the site annual emergency drill. (See April 21, 2006 weekly report). The Site Rep also had favorable discussions with the new managers brought in to improve conduct of operations. (See June 16, June 30 and July 7, 2006 weekly reports).

Tritium: The Site Rep observed a second emergency drill performed for the Hydroburst Tester Upgrades Readiness Assessment. The facility's control and evaluation of the drill were significantly improved due to the assignment of a new drill program lead. (See June 30, 2006 weekly report).

H-Canyon: Specific administrative controls were developed to verify that waste boxes have filter vents installed to prevent deflagrations. (See June 23, 2006 weekly report).

HB-Line: The Site Rep observed opening the new exhaust fan inlet vanes and balance dampers to the 75% level as the transition to the new exhaust fans in Old HB-Line began. Transition activities will continue over the weekend. Data transmission was hindered at times due to weak radio signals.

Calibration Laboratory: Recovery of the contaminated cobalt-60 source was delayed when the handle on the large shielded transfer drawer broke. (See July 7, 2006 weekly report).