

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 17, 2009

TO: T. J. Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: M. P. Duncan and M. T. Sautman, Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Savannah River Site Weekly Report for Week Ending April 17, 2009

DOE Staffing: EM-40 approved DOE-SR's request to increase the full-time equivalent ceiling from 336 to 355. This direction is allowing the hiring of six facility representative (FR) and eight safety system oversight/facility engineers, all of which were critical positions (3/20/09 report). Furthermore, although an audit of ten FR position descriptions supported their GS-14 grade level, those positions must be refilled through a competitive process (i.e., the currently qualified FRs must reapply and be selected again). (3/13/09 report)

Training: The Site Rep met with the SRNS Central Training Authority (CTA) to discuss planned improvements to the site training program. During the last 7 years, the training staff has dropped 63% and its budget 49%, while demand for training only dropped 8%. When SRNS benchmarked the training program against other DOE and commercial reactor training organizations, they identified that the ratio of instructors to workers and the percentage of budget spent on training was significantly worse. SRNS is pursuing several initiatives to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of training at SRS. In addition to establishing the CTA, SRNS plans to develop a new site qualification tracking database, implement performance indicators, fix long-standing environment/safety/health/quality assurance training programmatic issues, and improve the rigor of assessments performed to satisfy DOE-STD-1070-94, *Guidelines for Evaluation of Nuclear Facility Training Programs*. SRNS is also currently benchmarking system engineering and technical staff training in order to standardize the system engineering qualification standard for the site this summer (2/17/06 report). SRNS has starting hiring subcontractors to augment their training staff in preparation for upcoming American Reinvestment and Recovery Act projects.

The Site Rep also observed continuous training provided to an H-Tank Farm operations crew. During a valve lineup using mocked up diversion boxes, the operator responded correctly to two malfunctioning valves (simulated) and the verifier identified a valve in the wrong position (a Site Rep suggested simulation). The training also highlighted the need for additional emphasis on the proper methods to verify valve position, perform reader/worker, and track progress in a procedure.

HB Line: When workers removed one of the secondary oxide storage cans from a 2R shipping container (which fits inside a 6M shipping package), they found that significant corrosion had caused a hole in the can. The U-233 scrap was still protected by a plastic bag and inner can and no contamination was detected. When work resumed, the can was sealed with tape, placed into a plastic bag, and put inside a slip lid can. Respiratory protection and air monitoring will be required when the remaining U-233 scrap drums are opened.

Emergency Planning (EP): While a recent site training drill (in preparation for the annual evaluated exercise) was primarily focused on security and hazardous materials, the numerous improvement items and weaknesses associated with command and control and communications call into question whether the corrective actions instituted two years ago were effectively implemented beyond H-Area (7/6/07 and 7/20/07 reports). This is especially true since several of the issues were also exhibited by the Savannah River National Laboratory and Fire Department during the 2006 site annual exercise (4/21/06 report).