

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 16, 2001

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director

FROM: D. Grover and M. Sautman, Hanford Site Representatives

SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending February 16, 2001

The Site Reps and Steve Stokes conducted reviews of tank waste retrieval plans, tank farm upgrades, and tank integrity corrective actions. In addition, the staff reviewed Fluor Hanford's plans to improve engineering and project management and also observed a design review of the K-East Basin integrated water treatment and sludge removal systems.

Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): The number of occurrences at PFP continues to be higher than desired. Last weekend, a continuous air monitor (CAM) alarmed while operators were changing the bag on a glovebox port. In addition, workers trying to fix a problem with the bagless transfer system (BTS) cutting clamps inadvertently removed an uncut container from the sphincter port, leaving the glovebox open to the ventilated BTS enclosure. Finally, the results of a fixed airhead sampler on the duct level taken in late January showed an elevated reading of 12 DAC-hrs. This high reading may be due to contamination rather than a release because the isotopic distribution is abnormal and other nearby fixed heads, air monitors and surveys did not detect any contamination. Other recent events include a skin contamination, a criticality safety nonconformance, a second CAM alarm, and inadequate posting of an airborne area. (III-A)

Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): The third multi-canister overpack (MCO) was shipped from the K-West Basin to the Cold Vacuum Drying Facility (CVDF) this week. Based on the improvements in conduct of operations mentioned in last week's site rep. report, DOE-Richland (RL) allowed removal of the mandatory contractor senior supervisory watches (SSW) and continuous DOE-RL facility representative (FR) coverage in the K-West Basin and the Canister Storage Building. In addition, mentors are no longer required in the CVDF, however the SSW and FR coverage are still required due to the facility management responding inappropriately to an equipment problem. In this case the shift operations manager did not complete actions required by the alarm response procedure and initiated actions to resume operations manually without making approved changes to the operating procedures. This course of action was allowed by the facility manager and taken without notification of either the SSW or FR. Prior to moving the third MCO, the SNFP was required to implement actions to address these problems and ensure that the SSW and FR are informed of any occurrences so as to fulfill the safety oversight function commitment in response to the Board's letter of December 5, 2000. (III-A)

cc: Board Members