

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 17, 2000

TO: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. F. Owen, D. J. Grover, RFETS Site Representatives
SUBJECT: RFETS Activity Report for the Week Ending March 17, 2000

Feedback and Improvement. As discussed in the site-rep. report of September 17, 1999, during a “fact finding” meeting conducted as a follow-up to a radiological material spill, the site reps. observed a failure to follow basic integrated safety management (ISM) steps (i.e., revisit applicable hazard analysis and safety controls). In December 1999, Kaiser-Hill issued revised guidance and steps to follow for conducting fact finding meetings. The revised guidance and steps call for considering whether the hazards were properly identified and adequate controls were implemented.

The site reps. continue to observe failures to follow basic ISM steps during fact finding meetings. There has also been inadequate use of the fact finding meeting guidance during the meetings. For example, during a fact finding meeting on an air-monitor alarm during removal of equipment in Building 776, the applicable hazard analysis was not referred to during the meeting, yet additional controls (i.e., more radiological surveys of the equipment) were identified as needed. Following the meeting, the site rep. determined that the December 1999 revision of the guidance was not being used. During a Building 371 fact finding meeting it was not clear that any revision of the guidance was being used. The site reps. discussed these issues with DOE-RFFO and Kaiser-Hill management. (1-C)

Fire Suppression Systems. As reported last week, an Unreviewed Safety Question regarding fire suppression systems had been identified for several of the RFETS nuclear facilities. Water pressure in the facilities’ fire suppression systems would supply adequate water flow to the building sprinkler system but was considered to be insufficient to simultaneously supply adequate flow to the HEPA filter plenum deluge system or fire hose systems. DOE-RFFO received a Justification for Continued Operation (JCO) from Kaiser-Hill this week requesting that normal operations in the affected buildings be allowed. The JCO proposes compensatory measures including fire pump engine truck hookup to a building’s fire suppression system within 15 minutes of notification of a fire to supply additional water pressure. The JCO also proposes to increase the frequency of surveillances for the required combustible and ignition source controls. DOE-RFFO is expected to respond to the JCO during the week of March 20, 2000. (3-A, 3-B)

Building 906 Upgrades. The site reps. toured Building 906 to observe the ongoing structural and ventilation upgrades to support a new mission for storage of transuranic waste drums. The primary upgrade is the addition of a HEPA filtered ventilation system. While the air supply system will essentially remain unchanged, the existing exhaust system will be removed and associated building penetrations sealed. The installation of ducts, filter housings, seismic isolation dampers, and air handling units is expected to be completed by this summer. (3-A)

cc: Board Members