

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 6, 2000

TO: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. F. Owen, RFETS Site Representative
SUBJECT: RFETS Activity Report for the Week Ending October 6, 2000

Recommendation 94-1. As reported on September 15, 2000, DOE-RFFO was going to obtain additional information on Kaiser-Hill plans to halt Ash residue repackaging efforts in Building 707 later this year (an action that would result in not meeting the DOE 94-1 Implementation Plan milestone to complete Ash repackaging by December 31, 2000). This week, DOE-RFFO formally requested that Kaiser-Hill provide information on any alternatives that have been evaluated and requested that justification and schedules be provided to support revising the DOE 94-1 Implementation Plan Ash milestone. The site rep. has emphasized to DOE-RFFO personnel the need for DOE to address such a course of action with the Board prior to implementation.

Kaiser-Hill has started packaging sand, slag and crucible (SS&C) residues in Building 371 in preparation for shipment to WIPP. Initial operations are limited to packaging of produce cans in nylon bags directly into Pipe Overpack Containers. These cans contain SS&C with less than 10% plutonium concentration and no glovebox operations are required. RFETS had obtained approval to ship in this configuration in the TRUPACT, thereby avoiding the need to repack more than half of the approximately 3000 kg of SS&C into vented cans. Glovebox operations to blend down the remaining SS&C containing greater than 10% plutonium will be performed following the planned completion of Salt residue processing in Building 371 later this year. (3-A)

Inner Tent Chamber (ITC). The Readiness Assessment (RA) for the new ITC in Building 771, employing plasma-arc cutting, was completed this week. The RA Team noted a generally satisfactory level of preparations by line management and the strong worker involvement in those preparations. A limited set of findings was identified such as lack of currency of individuals' training to site-wide requirements and to the latest ITC procedure revision, lack of identification of all hazards in applicable Job Hazard Analyses, and some deficiencies in procedure validation. The site rep. and staff had previously noted that it was not clear how all training requirements for the ITC fire watch position were being captured. In response, Kaiser-Hill personnel indicated that ITC-specific fire watch training requirements (e.g., additional extinguisher training, fire combat strategy, and knowledge of the ITC Fire Hazard Analysis) will be added to the qualification card for ITC operations personnel.

The site rep. will follow closure of RA findings and ITC startup using plasma-arc cutting. Operations on at least four gloveboxes in the ITC will be under the controls and increased oversight required by the ITC Startup Plan, to include observation by members of the RA team. ITC startup is now projected for the week of October 9, 2000. (3-B)

cc:
Board Members