

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

August 31, 2001

TO: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. F. Owen, RFETS Site Representative
SUBJECT: RFETS Activity Report for the Week Ending August 31, 2001

Plutonium Stabilization and Packaging System (PuSPS). Stabilization and packaging operations continued essentially uninterrupted through Thursday of this week (operations were not planned on Friday). Plutonium metal and oxide materials were packaged into 17 DOE-STD-3013 containers (though the outer can weld may be rejected for one container), the highest weekly total since PuSPS startup in June.

The first operation to cut open the outer can of a rejected DOE-STD-3013 container (in a contamination cell, or C-cell, adjacent to PuSPS) is planned for the week of September 2nd. This operation would be followed by repackaging the inner can into a new outer can in PuSPS. The outer can cutting operation was reviewed during the DOE Operational Readiness Review. (3-A)

Recommendation 2000-2. Commitment 11 in the DOE Implementation Plan for Recommendation 2000-2 states that field element managers will assemble teams to assess the condition of confinement ventilation systems important to safety. DOE-RFFO has formally proposed a change to Commitment 11 in a memo to the DOE Office of Environmental Management (DOE-EM). Specifically, DOE-RFFO proposes that ventilation systems to be assessed include those with remaining mission life of more than 5 years and that ventilation systems in facilities that are being decommissioned or are planned for decommissioning within 5 years will not require assessment. This proposal to DOE-EM is being provided to the staff. (1-C)

Building 776/777 Deactivation. Various clean-out and equipment removal activities have been in progress in Building 776/777. During the past month there have been several instances of high airborne levels (identified through alarms and/or other monitoring equipment) during these activities. For example, during clean-out and equipment removal in a C-cell enclosure last week, airborne levels reached about 1000 DAC. It was determined that verbal direction by mid-level management to decontaminate certain surfaces in the C-cell following contamination surveys was not implemented and was apparently countermanded at the floor supervision level. Additionally, a general Radiological Work Permit control calling for such decontamination of surfaces was not being followed. During all of the events respiratory protection was required and used by the workers/supervisors; no radiological intakes are expected.

Building 776/777 management is evaluating these events collectively and determining any needed improvements to engineered controls and/or approaches to such work. The site rep. discussed the work planning done for the C-cell activity with DOE-RFFO management. The C-cell activity was included in the scope of a general clean-out and equipment removal work package that did not include C-cell activity-specific hazard analysis/controls and work instructions. DOE-RFFO subsequently asked for a review of this issue with Kaiser-Hill management. (3-B)