

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 26, 2001

TO: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. F. Owen, RFETS Site Representative
SUBJECT: RFETS Activity Report for the Week Ending October 26, 2001

Plutonium Stabilization and Packaging System (PuSPS). Welding issues have recently slowed operations. Following a PuSPS maintenance shutdown during the week ending October 12th, 4 out of 8 outer can welds were rejected, 2 welds due to weld splatter and 2 welds due to not meeting a weld centerline dimensional requirement (a repeat problem, see the August 24th site rep. report). Additional outer can welder maintenance work was performed and operations were resumed this week. On the sixth production container, however, the inner can helium leak check failed (the first failure of a helium leak check). Examination of the inner can weld showed a small hole and a subsequent inner can test weld did not replicate the condition. Maintenance of the inner can welder was being accomplished at week's end. (3-A)

Electrical Safety Program Assessment. In a letter to the Secretary of Energy dated June 21, 2001, the Board stated that staff reviews at several DOE nuclear sites noted that DOE and its contractors were not giving appropriate consideration to the guidance in DOE's *Electrical Safety Handbook* (DOE-HDBK-1092-98). In response to the Board's letter and a number of occurrences involving electrical hazards at various RFETS facilities during the past year, DOE-RFFO and Kaiser-Hill personnel conducted a joint electrical safety assessment in September and completed their report this week. Several issues were identified including problems with site-wide guidance, the lockout/tagout process and electrical safety training. The assessment included a review of the RFETS Electrical Safety Program against the Model Program described in DOE-HDBK-1092-98. Of note, the assessment found that the RFETS program did not have the equivalent of an "Authority Having Jurisdiction" and an "Electrical Safety Committee" of the Model Program. Development of corrective actions is in progress. The assessment is being provided to staff. (1-C)

Work Control/Conduct of Operations. As reported on October 12th, a Building 776 evacuation was conducted when a chemical odor was detected and several personnel noted symptoms including nausea and coughing. Initial fact-finding revealed that small cylinders containing organic compounds were being vented without any work/safety planning nor facility operations authorization.

Kaiser-Hill investigation of this event continues and the DOE-RFFO investigation was started this week. At week's end, however, DOE-RFFO decided to largely suspend their investigation for a few weeks until Kaiser-Hill completes their investigation. (3-B)

Use of Explosives for Demolition. DOE-RFFO has recently approved a Justification for Continued Operation (JCO) relative to a planned temporary deviation from the Site Safety Analysis Report prohibition of certain explosives on site. The explosives are to be used for demolition activities on three Guard Towers, now planned in early November. The JCO provides several restrictions and limitations on use (e.g., amounts, distances from facilities, etc.). (1-C)