

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 23, 2001

TO: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director

FROM: D. F. Owen, RFETS Site Representative

SUBJECT: RFETS Activity Report for the Week Ending November 23, 2001

Nuclear Operations. Due to the RFETS holiday schedule, nuclear operations were generally not conducted Wednesday through Friday of this week.

Work Planning. The Board's letter of April 25, 2000 forwarded staff observations stating that implementation of the RFETS Integrated Work Control Program (IWCP) will be dependant on effective mentoring of key individuals in the work planning process (those who develop hazard analysis, safety controls and work instructions for an activity). There was some correspondence between DOE-RFFO and Kaiser-Hill on mentoring for work planning personnel in mid-2000. Efforts to apply mentoring to work planning were not formally undertaken by Kaiser-Hill, however, until development of their Site Safety Improvement Plan in April 2001. This plan was developed to respond to a DOE-RFFO January 2001 letter on several safety problems (see site rep. reports of January 5th, April 13th and April 20th) as well as the DOE-RFFO Annual Assessment of Integrated Safety Management conducted in February 2001. Kaiser-Hill committed to develop a "continuing" mentoring program for work planning personnel. Kaiser-Hill recently reported to DOE-RFFO that this commitment was complete. (Note the distinction between IWCP process training vs. mentoring by knowledgeable, experienced personnel during actual work planning.)

In discussions with the site rep. this week, DOE-RFFO and Kaiser-Hill personnel indicated that the work planning mentoring "program" consisted of limited, non-technical, training of a single point of contact in each major project to begin mentoring. It was also indicated that no expectations for conducting mentoring of work planning personnel had been developed by major project managers nor was mentoring being carried out on any scale beyond the projects' single points of contact. The site rep. is inquiring with DOE-RFFO's management on their review of completion of the mentoring program commitment. (1-C)

Transuranic (TRU) Waste Management. As reported on November 9th, Kaiser-Hill was starting a Readiness Assessment (RA) to confirm readiness for loading TRU waste into off-site shipping containers using new loading facilities in Building 440. This week, the RA team issued their report concluding that overall operational readiness is satisfactory, that the limited set of (pre-start) deficiencies identified by the RA had been "resolved during the review," and that operations could be safely started. Chief among the deficiencies identified (and "resolved") was lack of fall protection on an elevated platform when a large opening in the platform is present. Kaiser-Hill management authorized startup of these TRU waste loading operations in Building 440. The site rep. is following up with DOE-RFFO management on the approach used to resolve the RA pre-start deficiencies (e.g., proper evaluation of root cause). (1-C)

cc: Board Members