

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 7, 2001

TO: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. F. Owen, RFETS Site Representative
SUBJECT: RFETS Activity Report for the Week Ending December 7, 2001

Plutonium Stabilization and Packaging System (PuSPS). On Tuesday, PuSPS completed nine DOE-STD-3013 containers, a daily high since PuSPS startup in mid-June. On Wednesday, one inner can failed the helium leak check, was found to have a 1 mm hole in the inner can weld, and some contamination had been spread to adjacent equipment. The failed inner can was bagged out of PuSPS and the contamination was removed. (3-A)

Recommendation 2000-2. As reported on August 31st, DOE-RFFO proposed to DOE-EM that confinement ventilation systems to be assessed under commitment 11 of the DOE Implementation Plan for Recommendation 2000-2 not include those that are being decommissioned or are planned for decommissioning within 5 years. As reported on November 2nd and 9th, DOE-RFFO was awaiting a formal response to their August proposal on commitment 11, but had received verbal direction from DOE Headquarters to proceed with planning system assessments at RFETS. Preliminary plans are to perform system assessments in Building 371, but such plans have been on hold at RFETS awaiting further (formal) direction from DOE Headquarters. (1-C)

Feedback and Improvement. In late November, a DOE-RFFO Facility Representative in Building 771 identified to RFETS management that there had been an unintended isolation of water supply to the deluge system for a ventilation system filter plenum (this particular deluge system is no longer a credited safety system). Building 771 intended that only the automatic portion of the system be isolated, but the support organization performing the actual isolation shut additional valves thereby isolating the manually-activated portion of the system. This issue, however, was not being addressed by RFETS management for site-wide implications and lessons learned. Following discussions with the site rep., RFETS management stated they would include this issue under an ongoing effort to improve the major projects' control of outside organizations performing work in their facilities (see site rep. reports of October 12th and 19th). (1-C)

Occurrence Reporting and Requirements Management. As reported last week, the RFETS manual on occurrence reporting had been revised in late October to eliminate three categorization criteria for occurrences dealing with degradation of safety structures, systems and components (SSCs). DOE-RFFO had provided their approval to eliminate the criteria on October 5th. On October 16th, the DOE Office of Environmental Management (EM) had provided a response to an August DOE-RFFO exemption request regarding these categorization criteria. The DOE-EM response did not approve the exemption request but asked DOE-RFFO to consider options to an exemption. DOE-RFFO, however, had not yet withdrawn their approval to eliminate the categorization criteria. This information was provided to the Board's staff.

On Friday, following receipt of another response from DOE-EM dated December 5th, DOE-RFFO withdrew their October 5th approval and asked Kaiser-Hill to identify SSC degradation events that have not been externally reported in the interim. (1-C)