

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 23, 1997

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director
S. L. Krahn, Deputy Technical Director

FROM: M. T. Sautman, R. F. Warther

SUBJ: RFETS Activity Report for Week Ending December 23, 1997

Bob Warther was on annual leave all week. Mark Sautman will be on leave Wednesday.

Salt Startup. As of Tuesday afternoon, RFFO had approved the corrective action plans for all pre- and post-start findings. Of the 45 pre-start tasks, the contractor had completed over 30 of the tasks and expected to have completed all but two tasks (see below) by close of business December 24. Thirty-three of these closures had been verified by K-H and eight by RFFO.

The two tasks that will still be open are the development and implementation of an audit plan to resolve quality assurance issues associated with RFEC construction work. SSOC is proposing starting salt processing prior to completing these two tasks for the following reasons. They have developed a list of the affected B707 safety systems. SSOC believes that the walkdowns and tests they have performed so far are sufficient to show the systems are acceptable for operation. In addition, they also believe that their return to service process and OSRs demonstrate that the safety function of all systems is intact. The main activities SSOC wants to defer are reviewing all the affected RFEC work packages and resolving any issues that they discover in them. RFFO will not make a decision on this proposal until they review the work performed to date. The technical staff is in the process of reviewing this proposal and the its justification.

The Site Reps spent several hours observing walkdowns with the B707 Shift Managers and Shift Technical Advisors to verify that their knowledge of the salt pyro-oxidation had been raised to an acceptable level. All candidates showed a significant increase from previous levels, although not all of them are at an acceptable level yet. In general, the Shift Technical Advisors' level of knowledge for salts was greater than the Shift Managers'.

Solutions. All bottles containing high-level plutonium solution have been transferred from B771 to B371.

Recommendation 95-2. All drums in the B771 Annex have been removed. Residue drum storage in the Annex was identified as a major hazard in the Basis for Operation.

cc: Board members