

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 7, 2011

TO: T. J. Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: M. T. Sautman and D. L. Burnfield, Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Savannah River Site Weekly Report for Week Ending October 7, 2011

235-F: Last week, the Board staff commented on the amount of unnecessary combustibles located inside 235-F. In response, SRNS had workers remove combustible items during the weekend and additional work crews will continue to remove combustibles during upcoming weekends. This week, DOE and SRNS also created an inventory of all the combustible materials and are prioritizing these items for removal.

A system health report on the exhaust ventilation system noted that SRNS conducted 740 hours of corrective maintenance on this system between August 2010 and July 2011. The two safety significant fans were available 98.3% and 90% of the time. SRNS is evaluating options to increase the exhaust system reliability, including possibly restoring the connection between the 235-F exhaust tunnel and the F-Canyon exhaust ventilation system.

Salt Waste Processing Facility (SWPF): DOE conducted a Construction Project Review. Technical findings and recommendations called for defining salt and sludge simulants based on commissioning needs, finalizing the SWPF feed waste acceptance criteria, and formalizing the process for documenting the completion of design activities. Other recommendations addressed the need to get quality assurance experts involved early on quality affecting issues, reviewing the practice of accepting construction and vendor defects and noncompliances “as is”, and developing the operational readiness certification and verification process plan.

Solid Waste Management Facility (SWMF):

The site reps met with DOE and SRNS to discuss the upcoming scope of work in Cell 11. SRNS decided to conduct a Readiness Assessment (RA) for the activity, after it was determined that additional hazards are expected that were not analyzed in the previous RA for Cell 11.

While moving culverts on Pad 2 SWMF personnel found contamination (< 2000 dpm/100cm² alpha) on the pad in a location that had previously been underneath one of the culverts. They posted the entire pad as a contamination area and then repositioned the culverts they had moved off the pad back onto the pad to meet Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) requirements). During the contamination surveys to collapse the contamination area, they discovered additional contamination as high as 15,000 dpm alpha in areas, both on and off the pad, near the location where the original contamination was found. SRNS personnel determined that the approximately 2/3 of the pad was an undocumented fixed contamination area and had been painted over in accordance with site requirements, but was not listed on the inventory of fixed contamination areas. Some of this paint has since worn away. Pad 2 remains posted as a contamination area until they determine what actions to take in the near term.

Saltstone: Grouting operations resumed last weekend and SRR conducted several process runs this week. SRR plans to run Saltstone through November and then begin an 8-month outage to implement the Enhanced Low Activity Waste Disposal design changes to increase reliability.

Safety Culture: In response to a several significant safety incidents and an increasing trend in injuries, SRNS issued a Safety Call to Action Plan. Over the next 12 months, SRNS wants to clearly articulate the SRNS safety vision, clarify expectations for workers, and improve top down communications. Specific actions address leadership training for first line managers and shift operations managers, developing management field observation training, reviewing the effectiveness of metrics, and better incorporation of safety and quality criteria in work packages.