

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 28, 2013

TO: S. A. Stokes, Acting Technical Director
FROM: M. T. Sautman and D. L. Burnfield, Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Savannah River Site Weekly Report for Week Ending June 28, 2013

H-Canyon: During an inspection of the warm canyon crane's wire rope, operators noticed that the hook was bent. Subsequent reviews of crane videos identified that the hook was bent two days earlier. After a crane operator completed flushing a warm canyon cell, the crane operator tried to rest the flush wand rig on top of the Low Activity Waste decanter. However, when the rig contacted the decanter, the wire rope went slack, allowing the hook to disengage and the rig to tip over. When he tried to pick up the rig again, the hook snagged a nearby spare tank nozzle. The crane operator then pulled the wire rope tight several times from the side (a prohibited technique) to try to free the hook and bent the hook in the process. The operator never called a time out, did not make any notifications, or note this in his logbook although this expectation has been very clear since a fuel bundle was dropped (see 8/14/09 report). Management is taking action in response to this incident.

Defense Waste Processing Facility: Workers transported three motor air pumps from the canister entry tunnel contamination area to the Contact Decontamination and Maintenance Cell. The pumps were wrapped in two plastic bags, transported on a cart, and lowered by hand onto a step off pad. Afterwards, personnel contamination monitors (PCM) detected contamination on the shoes of three workers as they tried to exit the area. Subsequent surveys found contamination on the shoes of 4 additional workers. The highest reading was 100,000 dpm β - γ . The other shoes had between 3000 and 34,000 dpm β - γ . The contaminated shoes were taken and radiological protection inspectors decontaminated the PCM, floors, and step off pad. Subsequent inspections found that one of the bags had several holes. Since earlier surveys did not detect any contamination, facility personnel suspect that handling of the bagged pumps caused the holes. All movement of wrapped heavy/bulky radiological equipment is currently suspended.

Rec. 2012-1: In response to staff concerns, DOE and SRNS presented their proposed scenario for the F-Area evaluated exercise. The new scenario involves a new initiator and larger release.

HB-Line: DOE will not allow SRNS to commence their readiness assessment for the new safety basis and plutonium oxide production until SRNS completes their corrective actions to improve conduct of operations.

F/H Laboratory: The site reps performed a field observation of the F/H Laboratory focusing on radiological conditions including high radiation areas, inactive high contamination areas and airborne radiation areas. As with K-Area and to a lesser extent the other areas previously observed, the site reps found the general radiological conditions and specifically catch containments to be satisfactory. However, staffing of radiological protection personnel is approaching a critical level. Only one first line manager supports shift work. In addition, while no degradation of the deactivated portions of F-Canyon and FB-Line was reported, the inspections have gone from quarterly to annually.

SRNL Resources: The site rep attended a discussion among headquarters DOE personnel, site office DOE personnel, and SRNL personnel to discuss potential reductions in Essential Site Services (ESS) and landlord functions with a goal to reduce this funding by 20%. This is part of a broader effort to reduce the funding for SRNS ESS and landlord functions. SRNL presenters discussed reductions that would affect items identified in DNFSB recommendation implementation plans and in other actions promised to correct nuclear safety deficiencies.