

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

January 22, 2016

TO: S. A. Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: P. Fox and D. Gutowski Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Hanford Activity Report for the Week Ending January 22, 2016

100K West Area. Work continues to prepare the engineered containers in the K-West basin for sludge retrieval activities. The contractor removed the top three sections of container 210 and installed a new lid to support retrieval. The top three sections were also removed from container 220 and the contractor completed the transfer of separately stored segregated settler material to the container. The site rep observed work on two occasions and noted that the work performance was well controlled and professional.

Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP). The Hanford Fire Department discovered fixed contamination on a regulator that had been transferred from PFP. Because of similarity to a previous inadvertent transfer of radioactive material, both the HFD contractor and the PFP contractor have stopped transfers of material from PFP to the HFD contractor until they agree on a solution. The PFP contractor is modifying material release procedures to increase release survey confidence levels prior to release of material. This action will apply company wide.

As work within the facility nears completion and because the character of work at the facility will soon change from dismantling of systems and components to demolition of the facility, the contractor has taken steps to downsize and reconfigure the workforce at PFP. The site rep has noted that this action has led to obvious signs of dissatisfaction within some parts of the workforce. Contractor management recognizes and is working to manage this problem. Recent management action to reduce the number of in progress work activities and to focus more oversight on the remaining activities should help mitigate this problem.

PFP held an all hands safety event focused on the topic of normalization of deviance. The discussion was anchored on a 45 minute presentation related to the NASA space shuttle Challenger event. The management presenter effectively tied the points made in that presentation to activities in the facility. However, PFP facility representatives reported that the overall acceptance by the work force was mixed with negative responses colored by the recent work force changes noted above.

Tank Farms. The contractor added approximately 16,000 gallons of 50 wt% caustic to Tank C-111 to soften and dissolve waste to support continued retrieval. The contractor is reporting that progress of retrieval effort for this tank is 41% with 20,540 gallons of waste remaining.

Waste Treatment Plant (WTP). ORP transmitted the results of the recent WTP Project Peer Review (PPR) to the contractor. The PPR determined that identified technical issues are well understood and are being addressed through the contractor's corrective action management program. Further, the PPR did not identify any additional technical issues. The PPR also noted that the schedule for testing and commissioning activities is optimistic and should be further evaluated. Lastly, the PPR noted that, although additional work needs to be done, the contractor's integration between design and nuclear safety has improved since the last review.