

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 5, 2017

TO: S. A. Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: M. T. Sautman and Z. C. McCabe, Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Savannah River Site Resident Inspector Report for Week Ending May 5, 2017

Staff Activity: D. Burnfield, R. Eul, Z. McCabe, J. Pasko, M. Sautman, C. Shuffler, and K. Sullivan conducted a 5-day review of conduct of operations at the Savannah River Site. The review focused on the implementation of Technical Safety Requirements (TSR) and the effectiveness of corrective actions to address past TSR violations. The staff team met with representatives from DOE-SR, NNSA-SRFO, SRNS, and SRR to discuss. The review team split into three groups to observe control room and field operations and perform level-of-knowledge interviews of shift operations managers, shift technical engineers, control room staff, and facility operators at Savannah River National Laboratory, H-Canyon, HB-Line, Defense Waste Processing Facility, H-Area New Manufacturing, Tritium Extraction Facility, H-Area Tank Farms, F/H-Laboratory, and K-Area Complex.

Defense Waste Processing Facility: SRR is making final preparations for the removal of the failed melter.

Savannah River National Laboratory: A small rubber piece of an abrasive cutoff saw ignited while cutting a sample consisting of a steel container surrounding non-flammable material in a radiological buffer area. The SRNL specialist cutting the sample engaged the saw emergency stop and extinguished the incipient fire with a nearby fire extinguisher. The specialist then contacted the SRNL control room to make the proper notifications. The specialist had previously performed similar tasks (approximately 15 times) all of which produced sparks while cutting the samples. These tasks and other similar activities should be identified as “hot work.” However, the experimental plan and hazards and procedures (similar to an assisted hazards analysis) used for this task was not task-specific and did not include “hot work” as a hazard associated with this task. Although the fire was extinguished in its incipient state with limited damage to the saw, had this task been identified as “hot work,” as required by the site fire protection program, the resulting “hot work” permit would have prescribed additional precautions and would have likely removed or evaluated the nearby combustibles. SRNL personnel are performing an extent of condition of other similar tasks to ensure compliance with the site fire protection manual.