

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 22, 2020

TO: Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director
FROM: B. Caleca and P. Fox, Hanford Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Hanford Activity Report for the Week Ending May 22, 2020

Hanford Site: Hanford site DOE and contractor management continue to follow federal and state guidance to reduce the transmission of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) (see 5/15/2020 report). After meeting identified gating criteria and receiving approval from DOE headquarters, the Richland Operations/Office of River Protection (RL/ORP) manager has announced a transition from the current essential mission critical operations posture to resumption phase 1 starting the week of May 26. Work under phase 1 will include high priority and/or low-risk work scope such as construction, medical evaluations, and training.

Tank Farms: The tank farms contractor held a return to work briefing in one of the larger onsite conference rooms for workers performing a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter change out for an AX farm exhaustor. The information provided was valuable and the workforce was engaged. However requirements have changed since the briefing to require the use of face coverings when possible. The presenter did offer face coverings and informed the workforce that more non-medical face coverings were being ordered to support operations onsite.

A resident inspector observed the table top discussion, pre-job meeting, and execution of the HEPA filter change out, as well as walking down AX farm with the field work supervisor prior to the start of work. Modifications to the change trailers to promote social distancing were clear improvements, but contractor personnel did not wear masks while changing as these were not yet required onsite. During the walkdown the resident inspector noted wind-blown debris in the general work area, which was appropriately responded to by the work crew. Execution of the filter change out and doffing using social distancing were conducted well.

A resident inspector observed a crew load two containers containing grouted long-length equipment onto trailers to support their movement to the disposal site. The work and associated special lifts were performed professionally. However, the work crew's overall compliance with COVID-19 hazard control recommendations was generally weak.

Waste Treatment Plant (WTP): A resident inspector observed two sessions of back to work training for WTP project onsite workers. One session focused on the COVID-19 hazard and the other was an industrial safety refresher designed to remind workers that, despite the current focus on the COVID-19 hazard, other significant hazards remain in the work place. The COVID-19 training provided clear information regarding COVID-19 controls and the expectations for their use; workers who received the training were attentive and their questions focused on details related to control implementation. The engagement uncovered some potential gaps in defining protocols for managing different situations that might occur during implementation. The managers who were present acknowledged the information gaps and indicated that they would follow-up and provide answers to the questions. The sessions also indicated that there is a need to integrate and align COVID-19 controls with other hazard controls. The resident inspector discussed his observations with site senior managers.