

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 25, 2007

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: R. Quirk and W. Linzau, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Activity Report for the Week Ending May 25, 2007

K Basins Closure (KBC): The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved the Fluor Hanford, Inc. (FHI) proposed change to quadruple the amount of sludge that can remain in the K East Basin and be subsequently grouted in a monolith. EPA also approved the use of casks to transfer sludge to the K West Basin as an alternative to the hose-in-hose (HIH) transfer system.

The site rep performed a walkdown of the K East Basin with a facility representative (fac rep) and the FHI managers responsible for sludge retrieval. Operators were successfully completing final pass sludge vacuuming in the North Load Out Pit. The project expects to complete final pass vacuuming this weekend. The last of the vacuumed sludge is expected to be transferred to the K West Basin using the HIH transfer system and a fuel transfer system cask. This should permit closing two commitments to the Board for Recommendation 2000-1. The fac rep noted that there were different controlled revisions of the same alarm response procedure at the control station for the HIH transfer system. The site rep also noted that there was an excessive number of bags of dry waste in the facility. Management took appropriate actions to resolve these problems, but they may be an indication that attention to good conduct of operations may be faltering while managers focus on meeting the 2000-1 commitment dates.

Waste Treatment Plant (WTP): A team from Bechtel corporate offices conducted a review of the project's readiness to resume construction activities at the High Level Waste Facility. The team identified 28 pre-start actions, including ensuring corrective actions for non-conformance reports have been addressed, inspection of reinforcement bars, and assuring that recommendations from previous external reviews have been evaluated to ensure no impact to construction resumption. The project had previously identified 26 of the 28 pre-start action prior to the two-week corporate review.

The site rep attended a video teleconference meeting sponsored by DOE's Office of Environmental Management to discuss common technical issues from the Salt Waste Processing Facility at the Savannah River Site and WTP. The Office of River Protection (ORP) and Bechtel National, Inc. provided minimal support to the meeting, which contributed to a lack of productive technical exchange of information.

Tank Farms: A worker was contaminated during size reduction of a pipe rack in S Farm. The apparent source of contamination was a contaminated pipe nipple inside the pipe that was cut. The radiological work permit (RWP) used for the task was for general work, such as collecting tumbleweeds, and not for hot work. Low contamination levels were noted near the worker's mouth and moustache and there were positive nasal and mouth smears. Low levels of cesium were detected during a whole body count and bioassays are in progress. This was the second uptake of radioactive material in tank farms in the last month (see Hanford Activity Report 5/11/2007). Expected compensatory corrective actions include requiring a job-specific RWP prior to performing any work that can resuspend contamination.