

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 7, 2007

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: R. Quirk and W. Linzau, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Activity Report for the Week Ending December 7, 2007

Waste Treatment Plant (WTP): The site rep met with the contractor manager for nuclear safety to discuss a proposed revision to the Office of River Protection (ORP) document that governs authorization basis design changes (RL/REG 97-13). The document sets the criteria for what design changes require ORP approval. The contractor is proposing that ORP no longer needs to approve the following: design changes that result in more than a minimal increase in the frequency or consequence of an analyzed design basis event as described in the Safety Analysis Report and changes that relate to how components meet their safety function. In addition, the contractor is proposing eliminating the requirement to update the PSAR every two years. The contractor's stated purpose for these suggested revisions is to reduce the time it takes to get approval for design changes and the revised criteria will allow ORP to focus its resources on more significant changes. ORP is currently reviewing the draft revised document that was informally provided to them by the contractor.

A leak was discovered in a buried propane line south of the LAW facility. The carbon steel, two-inch propane line was found to have a number of holes about 1/4 inch in diameter caused by corrosion. An adjacent water line (spaced about nine inches away) was also discovered to have a hole and water was found inside the propane line. Neither line was permanent piping but within feet of these pipes were permanent utility pipes. The propane line was installed in 2002, was coated to prevent corrosion, and is only used during winter months. The project is doing more excavation in the area to look for additional damage and working to determine the cause.

Tank Farms: The Office of Environmental Management (EM) approved the corrective action plan (CAP) for the Type A accident investigation of the tank waste spill at S-102 (see Hanford Activity Report 9/21/07). EM noted in the approval letter that in addition to the Type A CAP, they will monitor the development and implementation of corrective actions for other reviews and assessments related to the operations at the tank farms and the adequacy of oversight provided by ORP and the Richland Operations Office.

The contractor submitted to ORP a plan for improving conduct of operations (Con Ops). This was in response to problems noted in the field during the last few months (see Hanford Activity Report 11/30/07). The plan includes a number of initiatives developed as corrective actions for the S-102 tank waste spill as well as a number of new ones including: training to emphasize management expectations for Con Ops including procedure compliance, log keeping, and data sheet entries; development of a checklist for managers to use as a tool during oversight of field activities; and increased management and first-line supervisor oversight of field activities coupled with on-the-spot feedback.

The Vice President of Engineering briefed the site rep on a proposed plan to improve the conduct of tank farms engineering. The plan is based on INPO documents and addresses issues such as maintaining design safety margins rather than justifying long-term operation with deficient equipment and emphasizing engineering ownership of the design and safety bases.