

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 9, 2008

TO: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: W. Linzau and R. Quirk, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Hanford Activity Report for the Week Ending May 9, 2008

The site reps and Board staff member J. Shackelford observed the Energy Facility Contractor Group (EFCOG) 2008 Safety Analysis Workshop that was held in Richland.

Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): Senior contractor management established a new organization to drive conduct of operations improvements at various facilities (see Hanford Activity Report 4/4/08). The organization completed their first review/assist visit at PFP and identified a number of opportunities for improvement. A number of the deficiencies noted are recurring problems at PFP, such as failure to follow procedures, inadequate or ineffective management presence in the field, inadequate pre-job briefs, and scheduled work not completed because of inadequate planning or preparation. The recurrence of these problems demonstrates that prior corrective actions were inadequate. Suggestions for improvement included complying with the PFP manual for conduct of operations, increased management presence in the field, development of metrics to determine if performance is improving, and the use of prompt corrective feedback in the field from the work supervisors. The team leader indicated that he would be returning to PFP to observe work on a frequent basis.

Tank Farms: The contractor and Office of River Protection (ORP) are discussing changes to the Technical Safety Requirements (TSRs) and Documented Safety Analysis resulting from the spill at S-102. The changes to the TSRs appeared to be straightforward, but the contractor stated that the upgrading of administrative controls to specific administrative controls as directed by a recent ORP letter is not being implemented now (see Hanford Activity Report 4/25/08).

Contract Transition: The Richland Operations Office and ORP formally directed the contractors for the Project Hanford Management Contract and the Tank Farm Management Contract, respectively, to begin detailed planning for the upcoming contract transitions. The detailed transition plans are to be provided within 45 days. The letters note that the acquisition process for the Plateau Remediation Contract, Missions Support Contract, and Tank Operations Contract are expected to be completed this fiscal year.

EFCOG Safety Analysis Working Group: The site reps attended many of the presentations at the conference held in Richland this year. Though the focus of this year's meetings was on the reemergence of the nuclear power industry, significant time was dedicated to discussions on the implementation of the DOE STD-1189. Contractor opinions on the standard varied. Most believed the standard would be beneficial in reducing the risk of a project-ending nuclear safety design change, but some believed the standard would force safety decisions too early and, once committed to in writing, would be difficult to relax.