

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

September 16, 2005

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. Grover, W. Linzau, and R. Quirk, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending September 16, 2005

Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): The contractor Readiness Assessment (RA) for size reduction of the Plutonium Reclamation Facility pencil tanks restarted this week. The RA team completed the majority of the review and has not identified any prestart findings. The review is expected to conclude next week.

Last month the site rep noted that a room in PFP had only temporary lighting powered from a wall outlet. The facility stated that the temporary light had been in use for several months. The contractor did not know if the emergency light would activate if power to the temporary lighting was lost. After an extended period of time the facility determined that activation of the emergency light would not occur as required by the National Fire Protection Association. The situation was corrected, but it raises questions with the adequacy of the work planning process that permitted the installation of the light without considering the interface with emergency lights. The lack of a timely response to correct a potential life safety issue is also a concern.

T Plant: The Department of Energy (DOE) Operational Readiness Review (ORR) for the treatment of K-East Basin North Load Out Pit sludge was concluded on September 12, 2005. There were four pre-start and three post-start findings. One of the pre-start findings identified that the Authorization Agreement was not up to date and approved by DOE. Two of the post-start findings involved DOE order requirements that did not correctly flow down into Fluor Hanford programmatic procedures.

Plutonium 238 Drums: The in-situ inspection of the first three drums showed that the inner containers were intact and no upset conditions were encountered. The drums have been retrieved and placed in interim safe storage.

Quality Assurance (QA): The DOE Office of Environmental Management (EM) performed an assessment of the DOE Richland (RL) QA program. The first assessment criteria states "QA roles and responsibilities are clearly delineated to ensure a satisfactorily level of safety, accountability, and authority to conduct work safely." The EM team observations presented at the outbrief included "there is not a clear understanding as to whom at RL is responsible for QA oversight of the contractor," "RL does not have a consistent view of who has oversight of the QA of subcontractors and vendors doing work" and "there is apparent confusion as to the requirement for QA training for engineers, scientists, or other personnel (outside of facilities representatives and safety system oversight personnel)."

Public Interaction: The site reps met with the Hanford Advisory Board River and Plateau Committee. The discussions involved introduction of the new site reps and oversight activities at the Plutonium Finishing Plant.