

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 1, 2009

TO: T. J. Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: W. Linzau and R. Quirk, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Hanford Activity Report for the Week Ending May 1, 2009

Board staff member B. Heshmatpour and outside expert W. Yeniscavich were on-site observing the Single-Shell Tank Integrity Project Expert Panel Workshop.

Tank Farms: The contractor started redefining the controls for protecting workers during waste transfer leak and flammable gas accidents. The reviews are based on contract requirements, such as DOE-STD-1186, and recent direction from the Office of River Protection (ORP) for safety classification. The ORP direction increased the threshold dose for requiring safety-significant (SS) controls to protect workers from 25 to 100 rem TEDE for anticipated events. ORP also redirected the contractor to use the normal safety basis change process rather than a Justification for Continued Operation for downgrading safety systems (Activity Report 4/17/09).

Waste Treatment Plant: The project made significant management changes, including: T. Feigenbaum is Project Director, replacing the retiring W. Elkins; W. Gay is Director for Engineering, Quality, Safety & Operations; B. Rusinko is the Manager of Engineering replacing G. Ashley who is now the Project Technical Director; D. Busche is the Environmental and Nuclear Safety Manager; and R. Bradford will soon become the Project Manager.

The Project Safety Committee (PSC) approved an authorization basis amendment request (ABAR) that removes the requirement to have a PSC. If the change is approved by ORP, the safety oversight functions of PSC will be disseminated to the various project organizations and to the Safety Input Review Committee (SIRC). The newly implemented SIRC process has not demonstrated its effectiveness at evaluating safety basis changes (Activity Report 4/3/09).

ORP approved the ABAR for changing the requirements for environmental qualification (EQ) of safety components. The ABAR submitted by the contractor downgraded the EQ requirements from all safety-related components to just those that were safety-class. After discussions with the site rep, ORP reinstated requirements for SS components but still permits not complying with the standard if required test or analysis cannot be “reasonably provided.”

Plutonium Finishing Plant: There were three separate events this week during deactivation and demolition activities (D&D): unintentional grounding of a 240-Vac electrical cable in a cable tray, a loss of respiratory protection during duct removal activities, and contamination spread resulting in positive nasal smears and skin contamination. The project appears to be doing more rigorous reviews of these types of events and abnormal occurrences during D&D activities.

River Corridor Closure Project: Contractor management approved the start of work to wire cut hot cells in Building 327. The building was downgraded to less than Hazard Category (HC)-3 earlier this month after the DOE’s conditions for approval were verified to have been completed.

Mission Support Alliance (MSA): DOE selected the Mission Support Alliance, LLC as the mission support contractor. The MSA is comprised of Lockheed Martin Integrated Technology, LLC; Jacobs Engineering Group, Inc.; and Wackenhut Services, Inc.