

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 16, 2004

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. Grover and M. Sautman
SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending April 16, 2004

Waste Treatment Plant (WTP): The staff held a videoconference to discuss the development and acceptance criteria for a new high slump concrete mixture that Bechtel intends to use for congested placements. The Site Rep observed some test placements and the first wall placement Thursday night. Although the first two trucks were rejected due to problems with the aggregate and water segregating, tests of the accepted batch showed good cohesion and consistency. (III)

Tank Farms: Engineers confirmed that tank AW-106 was actually a Waste Group A tank after implementation of the Documented Safety Analysis although it was not recognized as such until sludge measurements were taken in February. A root cause analysis has been initiated and potential Authorization Agreement impacts are being evaluated. (IV)

Due to concerns with the potential concentrations of nitrous oxide and the ability to detect it, entries into all single shell tank farms and double shell tank farms without active ventilation now require the use of supplied air or self contained breathing apparatus. (IV)

Unreviewed Safety Question (USQ): During a DNFSB staff review on the Fluor Hanford (FH) USQ program, questions were raised about considering changes to note, caution, and warning statements as editorial changes only which could be categorically excluded from USQ evaluations. FH responded that their processes require that these statements do not contain action steps and that hazard controls are established and implemented independent of warnings, cautions, and notes. A Site Rep. sampling of Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP) and Sludge Retrieval and Disposition Project (SRDP) procedures identified numerous cases where these statement blocks did contain action steps. Also cases were identified where cautions and warnings direct verification of hazard controls and represent the only implementing mechanism. These issues have been communicated to DOE and FH. FH has indicated that they will be conducting an assessment to determine the extent of the problem.

The North Load Out Pit (NLOP) sludge retrieval Readiness Self-Assessment (RSA) forms were reviewed to determine whether this was identified as part of the Operational Readiness Review (ORR) preparations. This review identified that the need to evaluate the compliance of procedures to procedure preparation guidance and policy was identified, the review approach did not provide direction to evaluate this facet of procedure development. FH has drafted a revised RSA which incorporates this direction but it has not yet been released. (IV)

Sludge Retrieval and Disposition Project: This week DOE has agreed to revise the Plan of Action for NLOP sludge to allow DOE to conduct the Building 325 ORR separate from the K-East Basin ORR. The start of sludge retrieval is not expected to be authorized until the successful completion of the Building 325 ORR. (II)