

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 7, 2004

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. Grover and M. Sautman, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending May 7, 2004

Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): During receipt of Multi-Canister Overpack (MCO) 326 at the Cold Vacuum Drying Facility, facility personnel identified that the cask was misaligned in the trailer. Concerned that the misalignment might prevent a process connection near the bottom of the cask, the facility decided to test the alignment by removing the process port cover plate. This facility management considered this a minor repetitive task and verbally directed workers to remove the plate. While loosening the cover water was seen to drain out. The facility placed the cover back on and shipped the MCO back to the K-West basin to be realigned using a formal recovery plan. A site rep review of the operating procedures identified that the closure of the port, part of the shipping package containment boundary, must be verified in writing by operations and quality assurance. The safety analysis report for packaging requires the closure to be done in accordance with procedural requirements. These seeming discrepancies were discussed with the contractor and DOE. Subsequently a critique was scheduled to evaluate the facility actions in response to the misalignment.

Following the drop of a hoist in the K-West Basin, Fluor Hanford (FH) committed to DOE that a continuous Senior Supervisory Watch (SSW) and conduct of operations mentors would be established to provide assurance that the facility can be operated safely and compliantly for the duration of its limited life. Following a recent increase in conduct of operations events at the facility, a site rep review of the effectiveness of these compensatory measures was initiated. This identified that while the project has established conduct of operations mentors, a SSW was never established in accordance with SNFP procedures for SSWs. This has been brought to the attention of senior FH and DOE management. (II)

Sludge Retrieval and Disposition Project (SRDP): The contractor Operational Readiness Review (ORR) for the North Load-Out Pit removal completed the operations demonstrations and interviews this week. The project demonstrated vast improvement compared to the previous ORR attempt. However, discrepancies exist between project documents for bounding values identified in nuclear safety documentation were identified by the team. Many conduct-of-operations problems were noted during operations demonstrations, however, this is a widespread problem at the K Basins, as noted above. Work practices also showed insufficient consideration of industrial and chemical safety hazards. The Job Hazards Analyses reviewed by the site representative often did not discuss specific work hazards or the associated controls. In addition, worker interviews of hazards tended to focus only on nuclear safety hazards discussed in their training and not on these other hazards. (II)

Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): The Implementation Verification Review continued this week. The site rep expressed concern that the plan did not require actual performance of new surveillances. Field demonstrations were added, however, several procedures could not be performed as written and personnel did not appear familiar with them. (IV)