

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 9, 2004

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. Grover and M. Sautman, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending July 9, 2004

Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): The site rep observed the K-East (KE) Basin fuel inventory walkdown conducted by the project. The walkdown was comprehensive and identified no unanticipated fuel assemblies in storage canisters. One single pass reactor fuel element known to be missing was found during sludge vacuuming to prepare for sludge container installation is still in storage at KE. A N-Reactor fuel element is known to be lost in a debris pile following the failure of its canister while it was being prepared for shipment to K-West Basin. (II)

Sludge Retrieval and Disposition Project (SRDP): Efforts to implement minor changes to the North Load Out Pit sludge retrieval process have not been successful. The project is working to implement the batch retrieval of sludge option discussed last week. (II)

Waste Treatment Plant (WTP): The Site Reps accompanied a walkdown of the A6 Substation Switchgear building by Richland office senior managers and technical staff. This facility is still under construction, but is energized. Both RL and the Board staff have expressed concern that the fire sprinkler system protecting the 13.8 kV switchgear and relays was deactivated without approval by the Authority Having Jurisdiction. The system was deactivated after an employee filed a concern about electrocution in 2002. Modifications are needed to bring this back to a code-compliant configuration while preventing 1) short-circuits due to water entering vents at the top of the cabinets and 2) electrocutions. After the walkdown, the RL Deputy Manager met with the Fluor Hanford President to discuss this issue. Fluor is developing a plan of action. (III)

The Site Rep met with construction site managers to discuss recent near misses and accidents (see 6/25/04 report). A safety stand down was held last week and the Site Rep observed an all-hands meeting this week. Most of the accidents have been due to unsafe behaviors. The crew associated with the partial collapse of a rebar curtain was terminated because they were using improper techniques. Workers have provided feedback concerning perceived schedule pressure and concern that safety programs have "no teeth." The Site Rep questioned the continued adequacy of the hazard/control checklist being used and the amount of field presence by safety inspectors and management. This week, a manlift extension arm was lowered onto a wooden stand, cutting through a 480 volt cord (shorting it out) and partially cutting a water hose. (IV)

Tank Farms: Vacuum retrieval of tank C-203 commenced last Friday, but stopped after one batch due to the inability of the exhaustor to maintain the necessary negative pressure in the tank. In addition, a valve used for raw water supply was found in the wrong position. Only five batches were retrieved this week due to other priorities and a modification to address repeated alarms associated with a tank unconnected with the retrieval. While the Site Rep was observing one of the batches being retrieved, operators lost lighting for the in-tank camera when an electrician tested the ground fault circuit interrupter associated with the light. (II)