

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 1, 2002

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. Grover and M. Sautman, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending February 1, 2002

Dave Grover was in training this week.

T-Plant: This week the Richland Deputy Manager directed Fluor Hanford to revise their readiness review plans for removing spent fuel, conduct a new contractor Operational Readiness Review, and clarified that the ongoing Independent Assessment of Readiness would only be used as input to the line management declaration of readiness. This is fully consistent with the staff position discussed with Richland senior management last week. (III-A)

Tank Farms: During saltwell pumping, high-level waste (HLW) is transferred between farms through a hose-in-hose transfer line on the soil surface. During a recent transfer, HLW leaked out of the primary hose and into the secondary hose, eventually flowing into a valve pit, where it drained into another tank. The leak was detected by workers who heard liquid running in the pit. It is suspected that an earlier hot water flush might have caused a leak to develop where the primary hose is attached to a flange connector midway in the ~500' long hose. The staff has a number of questions about this occurrence that have been transmitted to the site.

CH2M Hill Hanford Group has completed the first set of Quarterly System Health Reports, which resulted in the generation of more than 100 problem evaluation requests. While the majority of the systems were rated good, 26% of the systems had an overall rating of unsatisfactory due to issues with availability, reliability, or identified deficiencies.

Mr. Sautman observed an emergency drill involving a postulated high efficiency air particulate (HEPA) failure. Things went reasonably well at the Incident Command Post although there were some delays in realizing an interlock failed and subsequently shutting down an exhauster as well as notifying the Incident Commander of the event. Controller reports from the field were very negative due to responders entering the simulated plume wearing only street clothes and not reacting appropriately when contamination was finally detected. (I-C, III-A)

Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): The staff reviewed PFP's plans for minimizing moisture reabsorption after thermal stabilization and measuring moisture content. Additional experiments will be performed to confirm full oxidation of uranium after the Site Rep questioned the extrapolation of thimble-sized experimental data to full-sized furnace boats. (III-A)

233-S: Mr. Sautman raised a concern after observing workers roughly handling the stuck and damaged blade of a very large portable band saw with their canvas gloved hands. Management agreed and directed workers to use diagonal cutting pliers, vise grips, or channel lock pliers to remove jammed blades rather than pull with their hands. (III-B)

cc: Board Members