

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

September 13, 2002

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. Grover and M. Sautman, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending September 13, 2002

Waste Treatment Plant (WTP): In order to address the cold joint, Bechtel National Inc. (BNI) has removed much of the concrete around the rebar (except in congested wall areas), removed most of the leading edge that is less than 20" thick, and is preparing the concrete surfaces. The Site Rep observed engineers performing visual and soundness inspections of the cold joint. The ability of the inspectors to differentiate the sound of the dropped bar may have been hindered during the parts of the inspection that occurred in a high noise area. While the Office of River Protection's (ORP) expectations for the verification of the cold joint's soundness appear to be similar to the staff's, ongoing discussions with BNI engineers raised concerns with the technical approach that would be used, especially for addressing the possibility of voids in the concrete and around the reinforcements. The Site Rep had several discussions with the ORP Manager and the BNI Deputy Project Manager to discuss these concerns. ORP issued a letter later in the week reiterating and further elaborating their expectations for the information to be included in BNI's evaluation. BNI senior management also indicated that they would be bringing in additional expertise and refining their approach. This issue is the subject of a staff visit next week. (I-C)

Tank Farms: CH2M Hill Hanford Group (CHG) has decided to require safety-significant, active, primary tank ventilation for their double shell tanks. The completion times for some of the Limiting Condition for Operation required actions are being extended to reflect the time that it takes for flammable gas concentrations to be reached. This general approach is preferable to crediting a general service ventilation system under an administrative control.

ORP commenced a focused review of the ORP and CHG Integrated Safety Management Systems as was suggested in the Board's October 2, 2001 letter on feedback and improvement. The new CHG Deputy General Manager issued a "stop work" after it was identified that construction activities possibly affected existing transfer leak detection equipment. CHG also completed an ORP-directed common cause analysis of the findings identified in 3 Rec. 2000-2 Phase II Assessments. As a result of the analysis, CHG is establishing an Engineering Quality Review Group and will perform four additional vital safety system assessments in FY2003. All of CHG's system engineers have completed final qualifications. (I-C)

Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): The SNFP is finalizing readiness preparations for the Fuel Transfer System (FTS). The operation of equipment in the K-West basin has been delayed due to construction activities. As a result, shakedown dry runs in K-West and integrated dry runs of the entire process in both basins have been delayed and reduced in duration. In addition, problems have been noted by observers in the facility emergency response program. Efforts to correct this as well as site security concerns while maintaining the schedule has led to the cancellation of several evaluated drills. This condition has been noted in the past and led to the observation during the joint DOE Richland and Fluor Hanford assessment of the readiness process that "Schedule compression compromises the quality of operational performance, not just the performance of readiness determinations." SNFP has extended the schedule 2 working days but it is not clear whether this will be sufficient to achieve adequate readiness. (III-A)