

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 9, 2001

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. Grover and M. Sautman, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Activity Report for the Week Ending February 9, 2001

Recommendation 95-2: An Office of River Protection (ORP) Integrated Safety Management System self-assessment identified the need for clarifying roles and responsibilities. The assessment concluded that it did not appear that ORP was meeting the intent of DOE P450.5, Line Environment, Safety, and Health Oversight, since safety assessments of the contractor were minimal and not part of a disciplined and integrated schedule. It also found the existing quality assurance oversight of the contractor to be “bare bones” and implementation very limited at tank farms. These findings are consistent with staff observations. Management clearly recognizes they need to fix these issues, but the Site Rep has yet to see a clear plan for this. (I-B)

Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): Mr. Sautman was able to work out with PFP personnel a way to speed up the resolution of alloy prioritization questions to support the June milestone. Worst case samples will be taken from the richest alloy skulls, chips, and turnings in oil to confirm that alloying with aluminum eliminated any pyrophoricity issues. Last week, a technician accidentally placed a plutonium item in between spacers in a fixed array wagon, then took it out and continued work. Two managers were informed, but did not take appropriate action. It took several days before the criticality safety nonconformance was recognized and declared. (III-A)

Recommendation 2000-2: Tank farms is making good progress on their Phase 1 assessments, but a review of a completed report found that limited discussion of the results reduced its usefulness. For example, the report concluded that each year there are more indications that the single shell tank ventilation system is starting to show signs of meeting life expectancy, but did not elaborate. PFP is waiting for direction from Department of Energy-Richland (RL) to start their assessments. One of the major challenges will be the ability of the ORP and RL offices to implement the systems engineer concept due to their current skill mixes. (I-C)

Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): The 2nd multi-canister overpack completed processing this week and was placed in the canister storage building (CSB). While there were procedural problems in all three facilities, operators in the K-West basin and CSB responded properly. However, the cold vacuum drying facility continues to improperly evaluate problems or take appropriate actions within the bounds of their procedures. An evaluation is underway to determine whether mentors and senior supervisory watches can be removed.

Mr. Grover identified that RL approved the startup of scrap sorting and loading with only a contractor standard startup review. This decision is based primarily on the safety documentation for the K-West basin already incorporating controls for scrap loading. However, these controls were not evaluated by the readiness reviews which authorized the current fuel loading campaign. This issue has been raised with DOE-RL and is being reevaluated. (III-A)

cc: Board members