

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 19, 2001

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. Grover and M. Sautman, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending October 19, 2001

Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): Mr. Sautman and Don Owen reviewed readiness preparations for the new Project W-460 Stabilization and Packaging line, which should be starting the contractor Operational Readiness Review next week. The staff questioned why a Limiting Control for Operation allows plutonium handling and processing work to continue for 48 hours when they no longer have 2 operable high efficiency particulate air filter stages. (I-C)

Outer can welding remains shut down. The evidence is mounting that the size and number of pores in the outer can weld can be correlated with the void space between the outer can and lid, especially around a chamfer on the can. Unfortunately, it appears that you can still have pores that exceed code requirements even if you tighten the lids and ensure cans are within required tolerances. PFP plans to perform additional analysis and a burst test to determine the effect, if any, the pores have on the strength of the weld. (III-A)

Tank Farms: Mr. Sautman toured the new Performance, Monitoring, Measurement and Management Operations War Room, met with the Sr. Vice President of Operations to discuss the status of the corrective action management program, and observed a Corrective Action Review Board meeting. With the backlog of open action items sharply increasing since May to more than 1200, it will be important for CHG to get their processes implemented and make them user-friendly. Preliminary data indicates that both salaried and hourly workers are using the problem evaluation request process, but timely resolution of issues will likely be necessary to maintain this participation. CHG is making progress consolidating their many problem identification and action tracking systems. The new database system under development will enhance their ability to track and trend data. Many of management's initiatives are promising although it is too early to determine their effectiveness yet. (I-C)

Grab sample results indicate that the hydroxide concentration in Tank AZ-102 is right at the Technical Safety Requirement limit (i.e., only 0.001 M above). Modeling had predicted that this tank would hit the lower limit around September 2001. The Office of River Protection is giving direction to have caustic added to this tank. (III-A)

Waste Treatment Plant: The Site Reps attended several HAZOPS and control strategy meetings, half of which were cancelled when key representatives were not present. During one control strategy meeting, it appeared that some equipment characteristics, e.g. seismic qualification, were identified as assumed design features rather than part of the control set. (I-C)

Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): Mr. Grover observed portions of the K-East concrete pad cutting as part of the demolition to prepare for the fuel transfer system annexes construction. The K-West excavation was completed without impact to the basin integrity. (III-A)