

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 3, 2000

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. Grover and M. Sautman, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending November 3, 2000

Spent Nuclear Fuel Project: The DOE operational readiness review (ORR) continued this week and is expected to conclude by 11/10/00. Most operations in both the K-West Basin and Canister Storage Building (CSB) were completed satisfactorily with only minor procedural and conduct of operation problems. One exception was with the procedure placing an empty cask into the K-West Basin which was halted Friday following a procedural violation. This activity is expected resume Monday. The emergency preparedness organization was ineffective in planning and conducting drills without interjection from the ORR team. The CSB personnel demonstrated good response during the drill and excellent self critical analysis following the drill. The K-West team failed to show adequate radiological response and was unable to put the facility into a safe configuration due to insufficient equipment and trained personnel. The facility also failed to be adequately self-critical regarding their drill response. The ORR will continue to review issues including verification and validation of the CSB design and whether Fluor-Hanford meets motor carrier requirements for fuel shipments on-site. (III-A)

Distribution Transformer Failure: On 11/2/00 there was a electrical transformer failure resulting in a fire at the CSB facility and a loss of power in the 200 area. This is the third of six transformers procured by Hanford from the transformer manufacturer ELMA to fail. These transformers were identified as having a potential major design or manufacturing problem in the Board's letter of February 25, 1998. The site is re-evaluating the response given to the Board concerning the adequacy of these transformers following this latest occurrence. (III-A)

Facility Representative (FR) Program: A couple of months ago, all of the Department of Energy-Richland (DOE-RL) FR positions were filled with qualified FR's. However, due to job transfers, promotions, and special assignments, only 70% of the positions today are occupied full-time by qualified FR's. Less than 50% of the facilities have full-time FR's who have completed facility-specific qualifications. For example, although three major processes have started operations at PFP recently, the number of full time FR's there has dropped from 3 to 1. While FR's are making valuable contributions to the Richland Integrated Management System and other projects, the remaining FR's are being stretched thin. There is a similar situation at the Office of River Protection where most of the FR's are currently performing operational readiness reviews and program assessments. In addition, FR's in both offices are acting as the FR division director which is taking them out of the field. This situation illustrates the need for both DOE offices to continue to develop the pool of technical staff with field experience, besides FR's, that can be used to support assessments and other reviews. However, recent events like a temporary hiring freeze are reportedly hampering DOE-RL's ability to fill critical technical positions like criticality safety. (I-B)