

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 14, 2000

TO: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. F. Owen, D. J. Grover, RFETS Site Representatives
SUBJECT: RFETS Activity Report for the Week Ending April 14, 2000

Board staff member C. Coones was on site this week reviewing fire protection at RFETS.

Recommendation 94-1 Implementation Plan. As noted in last week's report, DOE-RFFO was considering proposed changes to the Recommendation 94-1 Implementation Plan to combine the six remaining residue processing and repackaging milestones and to modify the process piping removal strategy for Building 771. This week, DOE-RFFO forwarded these proposed changes to DOE-Headquarters (HQ).

RFETS is also working to determine a revised start-up milestone for the Plutonium Stabilization and Packaging System (PuSPS) to be proposed to DOE-HQ the week of April 17, 2000. PuSPS has suffered delays while resolving the inner container welding issues and the subsequent change to a combined start-up strategy (see site rep. report of February 25, 2000). The delay to start-up has been exacerbated due to a month-long suspension of operations in Building 371 and procurement problems for stabilization system components. (3-A)

Fire Protection: The Board's staff reviewed certain aspects of fire protection at RFETS. Implementation of combustible controls and overall housekeeping was generally satisfactory in the three buildings toured during the review. A recent Justification for Continued Operation (JCO) concerning inadequate flow to filter plenum deluge systems in certain buildings was reviewed (see site rep report of March 17, 2000). The staff found that the JCO did not define required actions in the event of a loss or degraded capacity of the defined compensatory action, having pumper trucks respond to a fire within 15 minutes and boost the building's fire suppression system pressure. Furthermore, while the fire department was prepared to notify the shift superintendent of any loss of required pumper truck capability, the shift superintendent had neither procedures nor knowledge to properly notify the nuclear facilities in such an event. These issues were discussed with DOE and Kaiser-Hill management. Kaiser-Hill has revised the shift superintendent procedures and is considering modifying the JCO required actions. Other staff observations concerning RFETS fire protection will be provided by a separate report.
(3-A, 3-B)

Scrub Alloy Shipments. This week, RFETS announced that all scrub alloy (byproduct from reprocessing to remove americium from plutonium) shipments to the Savannah River Site are complete. The removal of scrub alloy by November 1999, was a commitment in the Recommendation 94-1 Implementation Plan. The delay largely resulted from more pieces of material being found than anticipated, requiring approximately 100 additional containers to be packaged and shipped for a total of about 400 containers. (3-A)

cc: Board Members