

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 17, 2011

TO: T. J. Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: W. Linzau and R. Quirk, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Hanford Activity Report for the Week Ending June 17, 2011

Plateau Remediation Contractor: The manager for Health, Safety, Security and Quality issued a stop work instruction for all electrical work that requires a lock-out/tag-out (LO/TO) because of events at U-Plant and PFP involving lack of compliance with procedures. As part of lifting the stop work, a management directive was created that requires personnel performing a LO/TO to carry a copy of the procedure and follow steps as written, and the appropriate company vice-president must designate a qualified person to confirm the required LO/TO is in place.

Tank Farms: The contractor determined that the failure to use available documents during the work planning process was the cause for the unexpected accumulation of tank waste in the plastic sleeving around a waste transfer pump that had been removed from double-shell tank AN-106 (see Activity Report 5/13/11). One of the significant contributing factors was a key management review group in the work planning process, the Joint Review Group (JRG), failed to ensure changes they directed to a technical evaluation were subsequently flowed down into the work instructions. Proposed corrective actions include ensuring the JRG verifies all controls identified in work planning process documents are incorporated in the work instructions and chartering a team to address how they can provide additional layers of defense to prevent spills from objects as they are removed from tanks. Last week, ORP directed the contractor to inform them at least two weeks in advance of pulling any long-length equipment from the tanks if there is the potential for having more than a few gallons of free liquids in the sleeving.

Waste Treatment Plant: The ORP Safety Review Board approved the contractor's request to allow the design and procurement of safety-class emergency turbine generators (see Activity Report 5/27/11). The contractor had noted that it may take up to 18 months to resolve all the technical issues, such as the much longer startup times for turbines compared to diesels. ORP's approval was limited to 12 months, after which the contractor will have to show they have made adequate progress in resolving the related technical issues before continuing.

Richland Operations Office (RL): The site reps discussed with the RL Manager the change in their policy on qualification requirements for a position as a facility representative. The requirements have changed to strongly favor personnel with engineering degrees. The site reps question if this change could exclude candidates with strong operational experience.

Emergency Preparedness (EP) Exercise: The site reps observed the annual EP graded exercise at the event scene and in the Emergency Operations Center. The site reps question if emergency responders and field personnel were able to predict the scenario for this exercise because many of the drills conducted during the prior months were essentially parts of this exercise scenario.

Plutonium Finishing Plant: On Monday, the contractor posted rooms that still contain most of the remaining gloveboxes in remote mechanical (RM) A and C lines as permanent high contamination/airborne radiation areas. Managers and workers had planned this change for weeks, but some weaknesses identified on Monday precluded work in these rooms. Work has resumed in the A line and managers expect to resume work in C line next week.