

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 22, 2012

TO: T. J. Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: W. Linzau and R. Quirk, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Hanford Activity Report for the Week Ending June 22, 2012

Board staff member A. Poloski was on-site this week to observe a meeting between the WTP contractor and the Consortium for Risk Evaluation with Stakeholder Participation (CRESP).

Waste Treatment Plant (WTP): Senior contractor management presented an effort called the “Step Back” initiative that will divert a significant amount of the project resources toward correcting the mounting problems. Many of the details of the initiative are not defined yet but it appears that much of the production work will be curtailed to focus on priorities, such as: resolving technical issues, including the implementation of Recommendation 2010-2; meeting the consent decree milestones; completing the LAW, LAB, and Balance of Facilities to be ready to accept feed; and establishing a new project baseline. The initiative includes revising many of the programs and processes, such as the procedures for flowdown of requirements, training, and corrective action management. The initiative will also focus on reviewing the current designs by conducting “deep dives” into system designs to check for compliance with requirements and ensure evidence files are in place to support Operational Readiness Reviews. Project management is tying this effort to the revitalization of their Nuclear Safety and Quality Culture programs, which includes addressing deficiencies in the behaviors of the project’s managers. The contractor has not set schedules, but the scope of work described indicates years of effort.

The site rep observed the weekly meeting between the contractor’s and ORP’s startup organizations, which focused on the proposed response to the Board’s letter on electrical issues as well as the planned turnover of some electrical systems from the construction to the startup organization. The discussions were open and productive.

ORP completed a self-assessment of their oversight of the WTP ALARA design program and noted their oversight in this area had been weak for a number of years. They also noted issues with the contractor’s documentation of ALARA reviews.

Emergency Preparedness: The site completed their annual graded exercise and, in general, the actions were appropriate. The scenario was a small commercial aircraft crashed into the Cold Vacuum Drying Facility while a Multi-Canister Overpack was being treated. Unlike recent graded exercises and drills, there was significant participation by the Hanford Fire Department (HFD). This increased participation allowed for improved training for the HFD as well as workers in the 100K Area and the Emergency Operations Center.

Tank Farms: The contractor identified another scenario (see Activity Report 5/4/12) that could result in damaged safety-significant waste transfer equipment. This scenario is not addressed in the DSA, but the contractor has not called it a Potential Inadequacy in the Safety Analysis (PISA). The scenario involves space heaters in the C-107 retrieval equipment confinement heating transfer lines above their design temperature. After prompting by ORP personnel, the contractor placed appropriate administrative controls to prevent the scenario. The site rep noted that the raising of this safety issue is consistent with a good safety culture but questioned why the PISA has not been declared and the unreviewed safety question evaluation initiated.