

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 4, 2015

TO: S. A. Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: M. T. Sautman, D. L. Burnfield, and Z. C. McCabe, Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Savannah River Site Weekly Report for Week Ending December 4, 2015

Emergency Preparedness (EP): The site reps observed an emergency preparedness drill in L-Area. The drill scenario involved two mechanics performing maintenance on a transformer when an arc flash occurred and injured one of the mechanics rendering him unconscious and not breathing. SRNS evacuated the facility and first responders revived the injured person and transported him to a hospital offsite. Before the fire department was able to extinguish the fire the drill was suspended and eventually terminated because of an actual security concern.

DOE and SRNS controllers and evaluators are currently compiling their observations for the annual site EP evaluated exercise (see 11/20/15 weekly report) involving the Savannah River National Laboratory. In general, the comments are favorable, particularly with regards to command and control by the SRNL control room and the SRS Fire Department. Controllers noted instances where radiological protection department (RPD) inspectors did not change their gloves after handling contaminated items and ended up cross-contaminating personnel passing through the decontamination line. While it was noted that RPD experienced “some delay” in setting up decontamination line step off pads, the preliminary comments did not address the weak command and control by RPD personnel. Another opportunity for improvement involved a first aid responder who chewed gum despite being in the hot zone for an extended period of time. Classification of the emergency occurred within 10 minutes, but it took three hours for the Technical Support Room to refine the source term. A first line manager at HB-Line was using an out-of-date emergency response organization code card and initially informed the field monitoring team (FMT) that the incident was occurring at the Defense Waste Processing Facility. The FMT coordinator was unable to communicate with the FMTs via radio due to lack of familiarity with the radio system. SRNS is still investigating whether it was prudent to let personnel remain in a trailer adjacent to a Mobile Laboratory that was involved with a simulated fire. SRS Operations Center personnel did not realize for a while that they only had a partial list of remote workers since the printer had jammed.

The facility response to a recent false fire alarm in the Saltstone process room revealed that the very loud volume of the fire alarm forced a control room evacuation and interfered with facility public address announcements. SRR is evaluating whether the volume can be lowered and whether changes are needed to their abnormal operating procedures.

Procedure Initiatives: SRNS plans to begin screening all reference procedures (i.e., ones not required to be in hand) to confirm the procedure is appropriately categorized and is technically correct. Criteria to be examined will include the complexity of the activity, whether steps can be performed out of sequence without significant consequences, and whether a procedure requires documentation of completed steps or entry of information into the procedure.