

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 30, 1999

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: M. T. Sautman

SUBJECT: RFETS Activity Report for Week Ending April 30, 1999

Recommendation 94-1. Stabilization has been completed for five salt residue categories (including one low risk one) and calcium metal residues. Less than 500 kg of salt in 6 categories remain to be pyro-oxidized by July 31. However, these salts tend to be rich so many of the remaining batches will be plutonium-limited rather than bulk weight-limited.

The first SS&C shipment of 50-9975 shipping containers (each limited to 20 Ci) to SRS was scheduled for this week. However, it was discovered that the packaging configuration used in prior tests (e.g., drop tests) did not match the configuration in the currently approved SARP. SRS is performing expedited tests, but a 2-week delay is expected. Additional tests will still need to be performed to support the future recertification of the 9975. Delays in issuing the recertification may require that 41 to 60 cans be repacked again because of moisture/storage time criteria.

The plutonium packaging system has been completely removed from the Broomfield warehouse. The stabilization furnaces are still being fabricated.

Recommendations 98-1 and 95-2. EH conducted an exit briefing of their March review. EH acknowledged that many of the findings had been previously identified. Positive findings included:

- Safety management has significantly improved at RFETS
 - Line management responsibility for safety has been established
 - Roles and responsibilities are generally well-defined
 - Organizations and individuals are being held accountable for safety performance
 - Effective institutional systems for the identification, analysis, and control of hazards
 - Integrated Work Control Process (IWCP) significant improvement in work control processes
 - Formal processes have been established to guide authorization of work
- Areas that need improvement included:
- Weaknesses in training and qualification programs of all organizations
 - Flowdown of requirements from the institutional level to work activity has not been fully effective
 - Insufficient guidance on thresholds for subdivision of work in IWCPs
 - Ambiguity in IWCP pre-screening criteria
 - Integration between IWCP and other processes
 - Application, adherence, and implementation of controls
 - Use of assessment results and prioritization of corrective actions

cc: Board members

