

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 23, 1999

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director
K. Fortenberry, Deputy Technical Director
FROM: D. F. Owen, RFETS Site Representative
SUBJECT: RFETS Activity Report for Week Ending July 23, 1999

Mark Sautman was out this week. Don Owen reported for duty this week as DNFSB Site Representative and began the training for unescorted access to RFETS nuclear facilities.

Building 771 Deactivation. The Management Review of the glove box size reduction activities in the new hard-sided containment ("bird cage 1") was completed with an exit brief on July 20th. Several prestart findings were identified in areas such as worker qualification, fire response procedures, and completion of Job Hazard Analyses. In addition, a prestart finding was identified concerning lack of a formal protocol to obtain operational data and provide the criteria by which to justify downgrading personal protective equipment in the future from supplied breathing air suits to power assisted air purifying respirators. The Management Review team and the RFFO Activity Oversight team intend to complete their reports by early next week. The Site Rep will review resolution of the prestart findings. The staff discussed with Kaiser-Hill management the need for proper control of allowable configurations of open window ports during operations (as based on ventilation flow test data). Kaiser-Hill indicated that a review of the ventilation flow data, allowable configurations, and means for control of those allowable configurations will be performed.

Development of the engineering design package for the next generation hard-sided containment ("bird cage 2") is progressing and is expected to be made available for staff review late next week. This new design is to incorporate glove ports for tool access instead of large sliding window ports and be capable of supporting thermal cutting operations. Kaiser-Hill management noted that bird cage 2 is planned to be ordered in early August but that the procurement schedule can support design changes based on any additional lessons learned from initial bird cage 1 operations planned over the next several weeks. (III-B.1.a)

Emergency Preparedness: In May 1999, RFETS conducted exercise READY 99 that included a simulated deflagration of a residue drum. Serious problems were noted in control of personnel in a potential high airborne environment and other command and control problems. Of chief concern was the failure to quickly evacuate personnel to a safe location from the simulated incident (as noted in the May 21, 1999 Site Rep report). Training has been ongoing to address problems noted during READY 99. Late last week a drill was conducted simulating a truck fuel fire engulfing several TRU waste drums. Improvements in radiological response and control of personnel were noted by the Kaiser-Hill drill controllers. Additional drills are planned culminating with a site-wide drill on August 17 to exercise all deficient areas noted during READY 99.

cc: Board members