

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 13, 2001

TO: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. F. Owen, RFETS Site Representative
SUBJECT: RFETS Activity Report for the Week Ending April 13, 2001

Plutonium Stabilization and Packaging System (PuSPS). The Kaiser-Hill Operational Readiness Review (ORR) continued this week and is now expected to be completed by April 17th. The ORR team has noted that the demonstrations of the stabilization and packaging operations were generally satisfactory. The ORR team, however, has identified several issues in areas such as implementation of certain criticality and radiological safety controls, emergency drill conduct, support personnel level of knowledge, industrial safety, and security program implementation. The ORR team is completing categorization of their issues into pre-start and post-start findings and intends to present results of the ORR to RFETS management on April 17th. The DOE ORR is now projected to start during the week of April 23rd. (3-A)

Site-wide Corrective Actions. As previously reported, DOE-RFFO outlined certain safety issues in a January 5, 2001 letter to Kaiser-Hill resulting from a series of events and negative trends during 2000. DOE-RFFO management had recently asked top Kaiser-Hill management to improve the quality and pace of the efforts to determine the corrective actions needed to address the safety issues in the January letter (see site rep. report of March 30th). Late last week, Kaiser-Hill issued a draft of their site corrective action plan to DOE-RFFO. The plan is broken into sections on management performance, supervision and worker performance, work planning and control, and feedback and improvement. The site rep. observed a joint DOE-RFFO/Kaiser-Hill forum this week to perform a detailed review of the actions proposed by Kaiser-Hill and further refine the actions to meet DOE-RFFO expectations. Following the forum, the site rep. discussed observations on the plan with DOE-RFFO management. For example:

- the need for effective training and mentoring of work “planners” is addressed, but not for other key work planning personnel as noted in the Board’s letter of April 25, 2000 regarding work planning at RFETS;
- supervisor workload (or “span of control”) is to be reviewed in the near future, but there was no action identified to prevent such workload problems on an ongoing or periodic basis;
- worker training on safety roles and responsibilities is to be completed in the near future, but there was no action identified to ensure that new workers were so trained nor provide ongoing or periodic reinforcement of these key concepts;
- use of the “Technical Response Team” concept instituted in Building 771 to improve work control for decontamination and decommissioning (D&D) activities is not fully captured. This is an independent technical support team that work crews are required to contact upon emerging work control issues, questions or unusual conditions encountered during D&D activities (see site rep. report of March 23rd). Instead, the plan calls for RFETS Project Managers to develop “technical assistance for work crews ” to “improve ease of compliance.”

The site rep. will continue to follow development of the site-wide corrective actions. (1-C)