

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 13, 2001

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

**Plutonium Stabilization and Packaging System (PuSPS).** As reported last week, Kaiser-Hill was investigating the visual inspection failures of the outer can welds for two DOE-STD-3013 containers (splatter/bead width and a void, respectively). This investigation yielded no apparent cause. PuSPS operations resumed this week producing at least 3 satisfactory DOE-STD-3013 containers and results pending for 3 additional containers. Processing of plutonium oxide was stopped, however, upon failure of the weighing scale supporting the Loss-on-Ignition test. A new scale is being obtained and is to be installed during the week of July 16<sup>th</sup>. Preparations for adding a second PuSPS operations shift are in progress and independent reviews required by the PuSPS Startup Plan are expected to be performed during the week of July 16<sup>th</sup>. (3-A)

**Building 371 Work Control.** During clean-out activities of a glovebox in a former standards laboratory occurring late last week and early this week, two lead containers were discovered. Personnel knowledgeable of the past history of the standards lab were consulted. It was determined that the contents were likely americium and it was decided to investigate the contents of the containers. Subsequently, the material was handled and placed in plastic bottles for further processing without revisiting/revising the work scope, hazard analysis and safety controls. The work crew also did not contact the Building 371 "Technical Response Team" (nor Building radiological engineering personnel) as required where such an unexpected situation is encountered. The Technical Response Team had recently been implemented in Building 371 as part of the RFETS Site Safety Improvement Plan (see site rep. reports of April 20<sup>th</sup> and March 30<sup>th</sup>). It was subsequently determined that the material had contact dose rates high enough to warrant additional controls for such handling. The bottles have been segregated in the glovebox and the area designated a High Radiation Area. Further actions to disposition the standards are being determined.

The site rep. discussed the failure to use the Technical Response Team as required with DOE-RFFO as well as Kaiser-Hill management. The site rep. will follow RFETS efforts to address this occurrence. (3-B)

**Component Procurement/Receipt Inspection.** It was discovered that suspect/counterfeit electrical circuit breakers were installed (but not used) in a nuclear material assay system in Building 371. Kaiser-Hill informed DOE-RFFO that an investigation under their Price Anderson Amendments Act Program will be performed by mid-August and that other organizational, procedural and personnel changes are in progress. (1-C)

**Public Interaction.** The site rep. presented an update on Board activities to the RFETS Citizens Advisory Board. Issues addressed included the startup of PuSPS under Recommendation 94-1, the Board's March 23<sup>rd</sup> letter on safety management during Building 707 thermal stabilization activities, and RFETS progress in implementation of Recommendation 2000-2.