

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

August 3, 2001

**TO:** J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director  
**FROM:** D. F. Owen, RFETS Site Representative  
**SUBJECT:** RFETS Activity Report for the Week Ending August 3, 2001

**Plutonium Stabilization and Packaging System (PuSPS).** Following a two-week stoppage of oxide processing due to a failed weight scale supporting the Loss-on-Ignition test, operations with oxide was resumed this week. Two additional equipment problems occurred this week, however. First, an oxide furnace controller failed during an oxide stabilization run and the proper stabilization thermal profile was not achieved. The oxide tray was transferred to another furnace and run through the proper stabilization cycle. Second, there was erratic and high-out-of-specification laser power observed during welding of an DOE-STD-3013 inner can late this week. Actions to troubleshoot and fix these problems were continuing at week's end. (3-A)

**Building 776 Deactivation.** While starting to remove a filter cartridge in a drained line under a glovebox used to de-grease nuclear components, the work crew observed a puff of powder-like material from the plastic containment taped around the filter. The work crew (in respiratory protection) immediately evacuated the room and other precautionary actions were taken. The work instructions called for a radiological control technician (RCT) to independently verify correct installation of the containment and such RCT verification had been done. Follow-up revealed, however, that there was a seam on the containment that had not been properly taped over and the material escaped from that seam. Building 776 is developing actions to improve/ensure proper accomplishment and verification of such radiological containments.

Late this week in Building 776, radiological air-monitors alarmed during a bag-out operation to remove fine grit material from the floor of a glovebox. Initial follow-up indicates that the work crew (in respiratory protection) was to remove this material by first placing the material into a plastic bag, and then transferring that bag into a second plastic bag-out bag to be pigtailed and removed from the glovebox. Prior to performing this task, however, an individual monitoring waste drum packing activities but not part of the work crew erroneously convinced the workers that the material should not be placed in the first bag but instead placed directly into the bag-out bag. The work crew supervisor was not present for this interaction, but the remaining workers proceeded with the revised task. The site rep. will follow resolution of this issue. (3-B)

**Work Control.** A number of previous site rep. reports have discussed use of "Technical Response Teams" at RFETS. Initiated in Building 771 following a series of work control problems during the summer of 2000, this use of multi-disciplined teams to provide quick assistance to work crews upon emerging work control issues, questions or unusual conditions has recently been implemented in the other main nuclear facilities (i.e., 371, 707 and 776). The site rep. and staff discussed implementation of such teams in the main nuclear buildings with DOE-RFFO and Kaiser-Hill management. While implementing mechanisms in the buildings differ somewhat, the overall intent for use of such teams is similar. Building 771 management noted that reinforcement on the expectations for use by work crews has been necessary (see March 23<sup>rd</sup> site rep. report) and has instituted periodic tours of Building 771

work areas by the team. (3-B)