

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 9, 2001

TO: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. F. Owen, RFETS Site Representative
SUBJECT: RFETS Activity Report for the Week Ending November 9, 2001

Recommendation 2000-2. As reported last week, DOE-RFFO had verbally put aside their prior formal direction to Kaiser-Hill to institute contractor system engineer qualification requirements, but was reconsidering this action following discussions with the site rep. and staff. This week, DOE-RFFO management informed the site rep. that DOE-RFFO will redirect Kaiser-Hill to institute system engineer qualification requirements. Regarding the August RFETS proposal on confinement ventilation system assessments, DOE-RFFO personnel stated that DOE Headquarters has verbally directed DOE-RFFO to proceed with planning system assessments at RFETS and that a written response is forthcoming from DOE Headquarters. (1-C)

Plutonium Stabilization and Packaging System (PuSPS). Operations this week were not hindered by the welding problems of the past 3 weeks and Kaiser-Hill completed about 20 DOE-STD-3013 containers. About 150 DOE-STD-3013 containers with metal and oxide have been completed (not counting current reject containers) since startup in mid-June. Given the rate of DOE-STD-3013 container production to date, DOE-RFFO has asked Kaiser-Hill for projected completion schedules and intends that such information will be provided to the Board. (3-A)

Building 371 Nuclear Material Handling. As reported on October 12th, the work crew moving nuclear material onto storage racks in preparation for assay failed to properly perform a required surveillance to ensure that the containers met the posted criticality mass limit (1000 grams). As part of follow-up, the site rep. inquired with DOE-RFFO as to whether lessons learned from a prior nuclear material handling occurrence in Building 707 (see site rep. report of December 29, 2000) were incorporated for this operation. Specifically, the key lessons learned were the need for procedural and training improvements emphasizing worker responsibility in complying with posted criticality limits prior to movement of individual items. It was determined that these lessons learned had not been effectively implemented for this procedure and personnel prior to the October occurrence. In response, the movement procedure has been revised to provide clear steps for checking compliance with posted criticality limits just prior to moving individual items and training has been accomplished emphasizing worker responsibility for compliance with those posted limits. DOE-RFFO management asked Kaiser-Hill to ensure that these improvements have been factored into other RFETS nuclear material handling operations. (3-A)

Transuranic (TRU) Waste Management. Modifications to Building 440 have been completed to add additional RFETS capacity for loading TRUPACT-II shipping containers with TRU waste. The new loading equipment in Building 440 will allow for Standard Waste Boxes as well as 55-gallon drums to be loaded into the TRUPACT-II shipping container. This additional capacity, combined with the existing loading facility in Building 664, is expected to increase RFETS's TRU waste shipment capability from 7 shipments per week to 15 shipments per week by early 2002. Kaiser-Hill will conduct a Readiness Assessment to independently confirm readiness for these operations in Building 440 starting November 12th. (3-A)