

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 8, 2000

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. Grover and M. Sautman, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending December 8, 2000

Board member Joe DiNunno met with the Department of Energy and contractor personnel to discuss Integrated Safety Management System and Recommendation 94-1 issues.

Spent Nuclear Fuel Project: The Department of Energy Operational Readiness Review (ORR) was completed on 12/4/00. The ORR team concluded that the facility was ready to commence operations once all prestart findings were closed, however senior supervisory watches and mentors would need to be present due to the weaknesses in conduct of operations. DOE Richland determined that all prestart findings were satisfactorily closed and approved startup of the spent nuclear fuel project facilities on 12/6/00. The first multi canister overpack (MCO) was sealed in the K-West basin and transferred to the cold vacuum drying facility (CVDF) on the evening of 12/7/00. MCO preparations for processing continued in the CVDF on 12/8/00 with processing anticipated to begin during the weekend.

As mentioned above SSW and mentors were required to be present for critical activities. The site representative observed performance of the sections of the MCO processing procedure in the CVDF from removal of the cask lid to emplacing the MCO processing hood. These activities include two critical hoisting operations and are the sections where two of the major safety related procedural violations occurred during the ORRs. During the performance of these sections the site representative did not observe the presence of the SSW. The mentor was present for most of the operations but was also absent during the first half of one of the critical hoisting operations.

In response to the Board's letter of December 5, 2000, facility representatives were also required to be present during these activities to ensure safe operations. Site representative discussions with 3 of the 6 facility representative to perform this duty indicated that no written instruction relative to their roles and responsibilities were given. In addition, the facility representatives were unaware that they should also evaluate the effectiveness of the SSW and mentors or the criteria by which to perform this evaluation. (III-A)

Tank Farms: Mr. Sautman observed the removal of a transfer pump with a snapped shaft from tank AW-104 and the installation of a new one. This evolution required approximately 4 dozen personnel, two cranes, and extensive contamination controls and shielding (radiation levels measured as high as 20 rad/hr beta on contact). This was the first pump removed at tank farms since 1994. The extensive preparation for this job, including several mockups, was evident as the pump was removed and cut up with hydraulic shears without incident. (I-C)