

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 28, 2002

TO: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. F. Owen, RFETS Site Representative
SUBJECT: RFETS Activity Report for the Week Ending June 28, 2002

Building 371 Nuclear Material Handling. There have been instances during the past few weeks with incorrect placement of tamper indicating devices (TIDs) on feed cans being delivered to the Plutonium Stabilization and Packaging System (PuSPS) (e.g., TID number not verified as matched with the can documentation). Such errors have the potential to contribute to a mixup of PuSPS feed material. As a result, Building 371 management stopped all special nuclear material (SNM) handling in Building 371 on Tuesday. Crews handling such SNM have been undergoing focused retraining on proper adherence to SNM handling procedures. This focused training effort has also resulted in changes and clarification to some of the procedures. SNM handling and PuSPS operations are expected to be resumed by July 1st. (3-A)

Building 371 Decommissioning. Building 371 work crews have been removing raschig rings from numerous large tanks using a vacuum system (12/14/01 site rep. report). This vacuum system has continued to show large reduction in the airborne contamination levels for workers compared with manually scooping the rings. This week, there was an operation to replace the vacuum hose line between the tank and the raschig ring receptacle drum. During the operation, a puff of material resulting in high airborne contamination (52,000 Derived Air Concentration) was observed upon removal of the hose from the slip-fit connection to the receptacle drum. Personnel were using respiratory protection but are being checked for potential intakes. Kaiser-Hill is pursuing better confinement controls around the hose connection for future hose replacement operations. DOE-RFFO is reviewing the work planning for this operation. (3-B)

Control of Subcontractors. The operations of two subcontractors were shutdown this week by Kaiser-Hill due to evidence of poor work planning and conduct of operations - one subcontractor working asbestos abatement in Building 776 and the other working in beryllium-contaminated areas in Building 865. The site rep. will follow-up on corrective actions being developed. (1-C)

Conduct of Operations - Followup. As reported on June 14th, a ventilation system upset occurred in Building 371 from a plant air system valve being improperly shut. A utility systems operator had been given direction to shut a nitrogen system valve (valve "N-50") but instead shut the plant air system valve (valve "PA-50") that was clearly labeled and located near N-50.

The site rep. and staff discussed the occurrence with RFETS personnel this week. Kaiser-Hill identified that the utility systems supervision had not informed the shift manager of the intention to shut the nitrogen valve as required by general Building work authorization procedures. The DOE-RFFO Facility Representative, however, subsequently identified that a specific procedure required by the Building 371 authorization basis to address such status changes to safety systems, and calling for engineering and nuclear safety review, had not been employed. Kaiser-Hill then employed the procedure for the nitrogen system status change and is implementing other actions to reinforce proper control of safety systems. (1-C)