

U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

REGION V

Report No. 70-25/90-02

License No. SNM-21

Priority 0 Category D

Licensee: Rockwell International Corporation
Rocketdyne Division
6633 Canoga Avenue
Canoga Park, California 91303

Facility Name: Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL)

Inspection at: Chatsworth, California

Inspection Conducted: October 9-10, 1990

Inspector:

C. A. Hooker
C. A. Hooker, Fuel facilities Inspector

10/24/90
Date Signed

Approved by:

Robert J. Pate
Robert J. Pate, Chief
Nuclear Materials and
Fuel Fabrication Branch

10/24/90
Date Signed

Summary:

Areas Inspected: This was a routine inspection of management/organization and operations review related to decommissioning activities at the SSFL. Inspection procedures 30703, 88005 and 88020 were addressed.

Results: Of the areas inspected, no violations or deviations were identified.

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DETAILS

1. Persons Contacted

a. Licensee

- *B. S. Pilling, Manager, General Programs Operations
- *P. D. Rutherford, Manager, Radiation Protection & Health Physics Services
- *R. J. Tuttle, Staff Health Physicist
- P. H. Horton, Manager, Nuclear Operations
- F. C. Schrag, Technical Staff, Nuclear Operations

b. NRC - Office of Material Safety and Safeguards (MNSS)

- *G. H. Bidinger, Section Leader, Uranium Fuel Section, Fuel Cycle Safety Branch, Division of Industrial and Medical Nuclear Safety, NMSS
- *M. L. Horn, Uranium Fuel Section, Fuel Cycle Safety Branch, Division of Industrial and Medical Nuclear Safety, NMSS

*Denotes those attending the exit interview on October 10, 1990.

In addition to the individuals noted above, the inspector met and held discussions with other members of the licensee's staff.

2. Management/Organization (88005)

By letter dated September 26, 1990, the licensee informed the NRC of organizational changes that had been recently implemented. The inspection in this area was primarily focused on these changes. The inspector made the following observations:

a. Changes

- (1) The Radiation and Nuclear Safety (R&NS) group had been renamed as Radiation Protection and Health Physics Services (RP&HPS), and had been transferred to the Energy Technology Engineering Center (ETEC) department.

Due to the expected retirement of the previous manager of the R&NS group, the Manager, Nuclear Safety & Reliability Engineering had been appointed as Manager, RP&HPS, reporting to the Manager, General Programs Operations (GPO) who in turn reports to the Vice President and General Manager, ETEC. The Acting Vice President and General Manager, ETEC reports to the President, Rocketdyne Division, Rockwell International. The previous R&NS manager was being retained as a staff health physicist until retirement.

Previously, the R&NS group had reported to the Manager, Health, Safety and Environment (HS&E) who reported to the Vice President, Human Resources and Communications (HR&C). The Vice President, HR&C reported to the President, Rocketdyne Division, Rockwell International.

- (2) Previously, the Manager, Nuclear Operations (NOP) who had managed operations at the Rockwell International Hot Lab (RIHL) was under the Division Director, Atomic International (AI) via other departments. The Division Director, AI reported to the President Rocketdyne Division, Rockwell International. With the new organizational changes, the RIHL operating staff have also been transferred to ETEC and report to the Manager, GPO.

The inspector also noted that the previous Manager, NOP had recently retired. This position had been filled by an individual that had previously managed operations at the SSFL Radioactive Material Disposal Facility, which is under the Department of Energy's (DOE) jurisdiction.

Based on the above observations, the new organizational changes should provide a shorter and closer management communication channel for radiological and operational activities at the RIHL. However, the changes separate the RP&HPS group from the HS&E department. No concerns were identified regarding the qualification of individuals in their newly assigned positions. The effectiveness of the new changes will be reviewed during subsequent routine inspections.

No violations or deviations were identified.

3. Operations Review (88020)

Due to time restraints, the inspection of this area was primarily focused on a nontechnical review of the current status of decommissioning activities at the RIHL. The inspection also included a general review of other SSFL Area IV facilities where special nuclear materials (SNM) have been used. The inspector made the following observations:

a. RIHL

The inspector noted that since the last inspection (70-25/90-01) the license had (1) completed sandblasting the steel liner in cell 2, (2) removed the lead glass windows from all four cells, (3) removed the transfer/storage drawer between cells 3 and 4, and (4) removed the floor tile and mastic from room 128. The licensee had also discontinued insitu electropolishing of encased radioactive drain piping pending analysis of the process fluids that may constitute a mixed waste problem. The next step in cell 3 was the removal of paint from the surface of the steel liner to reduce the working radiation level of about 30 millirem per hour.

The inspector also noted that the license had removed a large portion of the asphalt paved area in the RIHL storage yard. Licensee surveys had detected low levels of contamination in cracks

of the pavements surface. Licensee surveys also noted that the contamination appeared to be limited to the interface between two layers of pavement in this area. The licensee had not detected any contamination in the soil where the pavement had been removed. Removal of the contaminated pavement in this area had not been completed.

The inspector noted that the exhaust ventilation system for the hot cell facility was being maintained fully operational. Room air and stack monitoring instruments were also being maintained fully operational. The facility fire protection system and emergency diesel generator were also being maintained in service.

During the previous inspection, the inspector observed that grass and/or weeds near facility structures were quite tall and abundant, and appeared to be a potential fire hazard. During this inspection (70-25/90-02), the inspector observed that the licensee had cut down the overgrown vegetation and greatly reduced the potential fire hazard. Housekeeping appeared to be good in the RIHL.

b. Other Facilities

Radioactive materials have been utilized in Area IV since the 1950's. Activities involving radioactive materials have been performed under the authority of (1) the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) prior to the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974, (2) the DOE for promotional and development activities, (3) the NRC for specific licensed activities since the 1974 Act, and (4) the State of California for specific licensed activities. Several facilities located within Area IV, outside of the current DOE compound, have had some involvement with radioactive materials under all of the named authorities. Some of the facilities that have been specifically listed on the NRC license have either been decontaminated by the licensee and released by the NRC, or are currently undergoing decommissioning (RIHL).

Several facilities that were involved with promotional or development activities, prior to the 1974 ACT, have undergone various stages of decontamination. Some of the facilities have been partially decontaminated and/or purportedly fully decontaminated without the licensee requesting a release for unrestricted use from the responsible regulating authority.

The inspector and the members from NMSS toured several of the Area IV facilities with cognizant licensee representatives. The history and current status of these facilities were discussed with the licensee representatives in order to better assess the regulatory authority (NRC, DOE or State) that would be responsible for authorizing the final release of these facilities. The Sodium Burn Pit and Buildings Nos. 5, 9, 172 and 373 were of particular interest to the NRC. Regarding the responsible authority for these facilities, the NMSS staff will be negotiating this matter with the DOE and State of California.

No violations or deviations were identified.

4. Exit Interview (30703)

The inspector met with the licensee representatives, denoted in Section 1, at the conclusion of the inspection on October 10, 1990. The scope and findings of the inspection were summarized.

The observations described in the report were discussed with the licensee. The licensee was informed that no violations or deviations were identified within the areas inspected.