

APPENDIX

U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION IV

Inspection Report: 40-8027/92-29

License: SUB-1010

Licensee: Sequoyah Fuels Corporation (SFC)
P. O. Box 610
Gore, Oklahoma 74435

Facility Name: Sequoyah Facility

Inspection At: Gore, Oklahoma

Inspection Conducted: November 9-10, 1992

Inspectors: G. Michael Vasquez, Senior Health Physicist

Approved:

Charles L. Cain 12/2/92
Charles L. Cain, Chief, Nuclear Materials Date
Inspection Section

Inspection Summary

Areas Inspected: Special, unannounced inspection of operational activities.

Results:

- All major plant areas were operational and the licensee was evaluating maintenance, health and safety, and environmental issues.

Summary of Inspection Findings

No violations or deviations were identified.

Attachments

Attachment 1 - Persons Contacted and Exit Meeting

DETAILS

1. Plant Operations (88020)

During the inspection, major areas of the plant were operating and some maintenance activities were ongoing. In the uranium trioxide (UO₃) area, the licensee was replacing a steam coil in the No. 3 digester (an agitator had previously been changed) and the No. 4 denitrator was also down for maintenance.

In the uranium hexafluoride (UF₆) area, both A and B lines of reduction and hydrofluorination systems were operating. Further, SFC was operating four of its five fluorination towers (the No. 2 tower had been shut down for an ash receiver change-out on November 9) and one cleanup reactor was in operation.

SFC supervisors informed the inspector that during the evening of November 9, while placing an empty drum in ash receiver (AR) enclosure No. 3, the empty drum tipped over due to a warped metal floor. While warping in metal floors also occurs in other AR enclosures, the warping in AR No. 3 is worse. Operations had completed a work order for fixing the floor in AR No. 3 and H&S was evaluating the situation.

In the depleted uranium tetrafluoride (dUF₄) facility, the inspector found that there were no problems affecting operations.

During an internal status meeting, SFC managers discussed that the uranium and nitrate values in the sub-floor process monitor were elevated over the past couple of days. SFC was reviewing operational activities to identify the reason for the increase and the environmental department was to evaluate the data. Also during the meeting, the inspector noted that SFC managers discussed the planned upgrades to SFC's airborne emissions monitoring program. The discussions indicated that SFC's plans were continuing to progress. Finally, the inspector noted that two representatives from General Atomics' Quality Assurance (QA) organization were in the process of auditing the SFC QA program.

In discussions with licensee representatives, the inspector noted that SFC was proceeding with initial design efforts to redesign the piping in the cylinder drain station to bypass the cylinder drain filters. SFC had concluded that the cylinder drain filters were essentially unnecessary in meeting specifications for the amount of impurities in the UF₆. The change would streamline the process and prevent radiation exposures to maintenance workers changing and rebuilding drain filters.

The inspector observed excavation activities in an unrestricted area adjacent to the (old) Administration Building, near the break room. Prior to placing a side walk just outside the break room, SFC sampled the soil and found uranium contamination levels up to 1220 micrograms of uranium per gram of soil. SFC plans included excavating the top 6 inches of soil, placing a layer of mesh

material on the ground, placing 2 inches of rock/gravel, and then pouring 4 inches of concrete for the sidewalk. Contamination controls included barriers, monitoring of equipment and personnel, protective clothing, lapel sampling, and use of plastic for preventing the spread of contamination. The controls and the hazardous work permit appeared thorough and effective for the job.

The inspector also reviewed the status of SFC contracted health physics support. Licensee representatives stated that the two contract health physicists and the contract technicians associated with the unrestricted area survey program were expected to be terminated by November 20. These changes would leave SFC with about 33 technicians for restricted area and unrestricted area activities, plus an additional nine workers for the laundry and respirator maintenance areas. Of these 42 remaining technicians, 21 are contracted.

Lastly, the inspector noted that SFC had relocated the Personnel Contamination Monitors inside the mens change room into the buffer zone. Also, SFC had redesigned the mens change room to allow for enhanced contamination controls and a more logical flow of traffic. Appropriately, Procedure G-114, "Change Room Procedure" had been modified to reflect the changes.

ATTACHMENT 1

1 PERSONS CONTACTED

John Ellis, Senior Vice President
Scott Munson, Manager, Health and Safety (H&S)
*Craig Harlan, Manager, Licensing
Larry Tharp, Uranium Hexafluoride (UF6) Area Manager
Tom Kruppa, Uranium Trioxide (UO3) Area Manager
Dan Lewis, H&S Supervisor
Adrian Lucy, H&S Supervisor (Act'ng)

* Denotes individuals present at the briefing on November 10, 1992.

The inspectors also communicated with other site personnel during the course of the inspection.

2 EXIT

On November 10, 1992, the inspector conducted an exit briefing and discussed the scope and findings of the report.