



SRS Citizens Advisory Board

Risk Management and Future Use Subcommittee

Meeting Summary

January 10, 2000
North Augusta Community Center
North Augusta, SC

The SRS CAB Risk Management and Future Use (RM&FU) Subcommittee held a meeting on Monday, January 10 at the North Augusta Community Center. Topics of discussion included the SRS Courtesy Notification Process, Status of the SRS Implementation of the Statement of Principles and discussion on a recommendation for the Strategic Plan. Attendees included the following:

CAB Members

P.K Smith
Jimmy Mackey
Wade Waters

Stakeholders

Lee Poe
Sam Booher
Mike French
Myrtle Knapper
Trish McCracken
Larry Callair
William Willoughby II
Chasiti Kirkland
Sharon Cribb, SCDHEC
Rick McLeod, CAB Tech. Adv.

DOE/Contractors

Bob Steadman, WSRC
John Merrick, DOE
Chuck Boroup, DOE
Chris Noah, WSRC
Gail Jernigan, WSRC
George Mishra, DOE
Sonny Goldston, BNFL
Gerry Stejskal, WSRC
Joan Bozzzone, DOE
Deb Foutch, WSRC
Dale Bignell, WSRC
Donna Martin, WSRC

SRS Courtesy Notification Process

Bob Steadman, Offsite Programs Coordinator, WSRC Emergency Services Department, gave a presentation on the SRS process of providing courtesy notifications. To explain why SRS has chosen to provide courtesy notifications, Steadman said it was necessary to talk about the types of notifications supported by SRS.

The three types of notifications are regulatory, emergency and courtesy. Regulatory notifications include events with hazardous material releases that are reportable quantities as defined in Code of Federal Regulations that may or may not be an emergency. These types of notifications are also listed in the Annual Environmental Report each year. SRS had eight regulatory notices in 1999 and six the previous year.

Emergency notifications are events that fall within the emergency classification established by DOE orders. These notifications must be made within 15 minutes of the site declaration when an emergency is taking place. Only two emergency notifications have occurred in the history of the site.

Steadman said SRS originally did not have firm criteria in place to specify what constituted a courtesy notification. He then described three events that prompted SRS to develop a procedure for making courtesy notifications.

The first event prompting notification concern was on June 16, 1995, when a tritium release within regulatory limits occurred in H Area. Offsite teams were dispatched to take monitoring samples on Broad Street in Augusta without prior discussion with offsite agencies. Notifications were not conducted until three hours after the event occurred. State and local agencies voiced major concern four days later at a DOE Region 3 Outreach meeting. SRS acknowledged the lack of notification criteria and in August, the SRS Operations Center modified its 304-1 procedure to include courtesy notification criteria.

A June 1997 event in the Receiving Basin for Offsite Fuels (RBOF), however, is what brought the courtesy notifications to the more stringent procedure currently used. At 4 a.m., a stack alarm sounded, but no reportable levels were detected and no protective actions taken. At 8:15 a.m., the RBOF facility manager asked that the H Canyon shift manager make a public address asking personnel to remain indoors until surveys were completed. By 8:36 a.m., a shelter protective action recommendation was issued by the Emergency Duty Officer (EDO) for a two-mile radius (E, Z and S Areas) as the default for a possible unknown release.

The all clear was finally issued by 10:55 a.m., although courtesy notifications did not take place until 11:25 a.m. Other major errors included completely missing a notification to the South Carolina Environmental Preparedness Division (SC EPD), followup responses from outside organizations were not routed to the proper SRS authorities or received inadequate answers.

Steadman said SRS acknowledged it had done a poor job of offsite notifications and a meeting was held in July 1997 among SRS and state and local emergency management/environmental health officials in Georgia and South Carolina to critique the event and make sure it would not happen again. At the meeting, the GA and SC officials agreed that the following events should trigger courtesy notifications.

- Nuclear Incident Monitor (NIM) alarm
- Tritium release >600 curies
- Transport of a radiologically contaminated patient to an offsite medical facility
- Earthquake felt onsite
- Reportable Quantity (RQ) exceeded as determined by Site Environmental Protection Coordinator
- National Response Center is notified
- Onsite protective actions implemented as a result of actual or potential environmental release.
- Offsite deployment of SRS monitoring personnel in response to an onsite release
- Activation of the Dam Assessment Team (Par Pond and L Lake only)
- Site public relations plan a press release for the environmental occurrence
- Significant interest from the media or general public
- SRS requests federal/state/local assistance to mitigate an onsite event
- Any unscheduled event which may trigger media/public interest

P.K. Smith, RM&FU chair, said she had concern that NIM alarms are considered in the courtesy notifications because of the many false alarms due to electrical problems. Steadman said state officials were told about the false alarms yet they wanted to be notified anyway.

Sam Booher, public, said he would want to know if an alarm did sound and why there are problems with the equipment. Steadman said one of the NIM alarms reports was as simple as a NIM alarm bell sounding when an employee touched it. Four NIM alarm courtesy notifications have occurred during calendar year 1999.

Lee Poe, public, questioned the determination of an earthquake onsite. Steadman said in the past, the site would only report earthquakes with damage. Now, even tremors would be reported in courtesy notifications, even though none have been recorded since the courtesy notifications began. Poe was concerned that there was no gauge on what constituted the earthquake being "felt" onsite. Several attendees voiced concerns of over reporting in courtesy notifications and using data that could not be relied upon.

In reviewing the entire list of triggers for courtesy notification, several questioned what constituted "significant" interest from the media. Steadman said the determination is made by the Emergency Duty Officer (EDO), who reviews all site events throughout the day.

Steadman then explained the process for making a courtesy notification. They are conducted by the EDO who uses the emergency notification network and faxes to notify the South Carolina and Georgia Warning Points at the state and county levels. The WSRC Emergency Services Department Offsite Liaison will also conduct follow up calls to reach those on the notification list, regardless where they are at the time (on vacation for example).

Wade Waters, CAB, said he believes the CAB should be included on the courtesy notification list because they could help alleviate calls to the site. He said perceived risks were very damaging to SRS. If the CAB could help inform the public of the notifications, they could be used as a resource. At this point, Steadman invited the CAB to attend a January 20 meeting with SRS and state agencies to discuss courtesy notifications.

Poe asked if Plant Vogtle or other companies conduct courtesy notifications. Steadman said the SRS courtesy notifications were extraordinary efforts. In closing, Steadman added that SRS felt it important to meet the requests of the offsite agencies by keeping neighbors informed of activities at SRS, not just in emergency situations. He added that in addition to courtesy notifications, the SRS emergency management program conducts quarterly issues meetings, briefings and tours, procedure reviews, safeguards and securities vulnerability reviews and monthly offsite visits and updates.

Status of SRS Implementation of the Statement of Principles

Chuck Borup, DOE Planning and Budget Division, opened the second portion of the meeting by describing the "Statement of Principles", a collaborative approach between DOE and the South Carolina's Governors Office to implement long-term specific goals. The Secretary of Energy met with the governors of the various states that have DOE facilities. Each of the principles was assigned to a DOE senior manager. Borup added SRS would address the principles through the site's Comprehensive Plan.

Several major issues are addressed in the Comprehensive Plan, Borup said. They include material balance, a timetable for cleanup and subsequent facility disposition, national equity, new missions (new money) and future land use.

Poe said he felt it was a terrible political mistake to develop a Statement of Principles with South Carolina but not with Georgia. Gail Jernigan, WSRC, said although Georgia was not initially involved, DOE is planning to develop a similar agreement with Georgia.

Borup said SRS's goal of accomplishing the Statement of Principles is to roll the principles into the Comprehensive Plan, which was due in February. Jernigan said the subcommittee would need to state how it wanted to review the Comprehensive Plan, by chapter or in a good preliminary draft. Most of the members said they preferred a good final draft before it is given to the public for review and comment.

A question was asked if the SRS structure would change as the new National Nuclear Security organization began operating. Joan Bozzone, DOE, said the change is programmatic and would not affect the functional responsibilities of SRS, which would be listed in the Comprehensive Plan.

In reviewing the Comprehensive Plan schedule, Borup said the internal working level document would be complete by March 15. Smith, chair, asked that the Comprehensive Plan be placed on the subcommittee agenda in late February.

In closing, Borup highlighted some of the site's accomplishments in the comprehensive planning process as follows: communications with stakeholders (public, regulators and emergency management organizations), Environmental Stewardship (HLW vitrification is 12% complete) and assuring future site vitality for the nuclear weapons and materials stewardship. Issues that continue to be worked include final disposition of surplus nuclear facilities, long-term stewardship, reconfiguring the site for future work, future land use, timing of final disposition of wastes and cost effectiveness.

Strategic Plan Status

The final item on the agenda was discussion of the draft Strategic Plan motion. Smith said when approved the motion would be sent to DOE with the detailed comments of each individual included as an attachment.

Booher said he was concerned the Strategic Plan was going into more detail than was necessary on new missions. Poe said he had not heard of the Pit Disassembly and Conversion Facility mentioned before. Bozzone said the facility had been discussed but a decision had not been made on whether such a facility would be located at SRS.

Jimmy Mackey said he has concerns that the SRS CAB is not chartered to look at Defense Program (DP) or Materials Disposition (MD) activities. Although number 6 on the recommendation addressed the issue, Mackey felt it should have stronger wording. All agreed that it should be reworded to emphasize the deficiency of stakeholder involvement in the DP and MD programs.

In other comments on the Strategic Plan, Poe said decontamination and decommissioning was not adequately covered. He said it should be addressed because millions of dollars are being used to perform surveillance and maintenance on facilities no longer used.

In final discussion, Smith said the recommendation would be reworked then sent to everyone for review.

Public Comment Period

Referencing the courtesy notifications presentation, Sharon Cribb, SCDHEC, Nuclear Emergency Response, said she participates in the working groups and offered to give a presentation to the CAB about what SCDHEC's responsibilities and why the courtesy notifications are important. She provided her phone number and invited CAB members to call anytime if they have questions.

Booher said he had been waiting since October 6 on confirmation from DOE to meet with a DOE-SR assistant manager to discuss several issues of concern. Booher said he had asked to talk directly with Greg Rudy but was told he had to meet with an assistant manager first. Booher emphasized he is waiting for the meeting to be scheduled.

Mike French brought up the fact that SRS is celebrating its 50th anniversary and several activities have been planned over the year. He said Citizens for Nuclear Technology Awareness is helping organize the activities and he suggested the CAB should also participate.

Poe's public comment focused on the evaluation sheets attendees are asked to complete at the end of subcommittee meetings. He does not believe they are useful and he disagrees with the appraisal value of the staff. Poe said the support staff is doing everything possible to meet the needs of the subcommittee and the public and they should not suffer if the rater had concerns with the presentation or the public involvement process itself. Trish McCracken agreed with Poe.

William Willoughby, public, had the final comment. He said having to wait until the end of the meeting to make public comments was not public participation. Smith apologized for his misunderstanding that he could not comment until the meeting's end. She pointed out that Poe was a member of the public and participated actively in the meeting. Poe also emphasized that point.

After stating that attendees were always welcome to participate, the meeting was adjourned.

Meeting handouts may be obtained by calling 1-800-249-8155.