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For Immediate Release

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Mock-up Project Reduces Risk in Salt Waste Processing Facility Integration Work

AIKEN, S.C. (November 1, 2018) – It is said that practice makes perfect, and the liquid waste contractor at the Savannah River Site (SRS) is putting practice into action before tackling significant projects.

In the most recent case, practice ensured reduced risk to Savannah River Remediation (SRR) workers modifying underground radioactive waste transfer lines in support of Salt Waste Processing Facility (SWPF) integration.

SRR is responsible for integrating the SWPF into SRS liquid waste facilities. SWPF, currently in testing and commissioning, will be the key facility to process remaining salt waste inventory at SRS.

Among integration work is physical tie-ins of the transfer lines. SRR construction workers completed an exploratory excavation of the transfer line area in December 2017 to determine the configuration needed for the line work.

At that time, it was discovered that the transfer line to be modified had higher radiation rates than expected. To ensure the construction team could safely perform this work, a mock-up of the excavation was performed to resolve potential issues. The mock-up included other transfer lines that were within the excavation boundary to realistically show how the conditions would be during the actual tie-in work. The mock-up area, fabricated by SRR construction forces, was 8 feet wide, 12 feet long, and 4 feet deep.

DOE-Savannah River Assistant Manager for Waste Disposition Jim Folk said everyone wins anytime controls are implemented to reduce risk.

“The mock-ups used for the liquid waste operations and SWPF tie-in project are an ideal way to test the execution of this important but hazardous scope,” Folk said. “Ultimately, it helps to determine the tools and techniques that will be needed to perform the tie-ins while reducing exposure to the workers.”

Using mock-ups and remote tools, among other controls, will significantly reduce the risk and total radiological dose from this work, according to Keith Harp, liquid waste/SWPF integration program manager.

Completing the tie-ins for the transfer lines is expected to take place during the final SWPF tie-ins, which will be completed just prior to SWPF startup.

Cutline

Workers practice waste transfer line modification work in a mock-up area.



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