

**Recommendation #257  
Facility Tour Recommendation**

**Background**

As written in the Savannah River Site (SRS) Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) mission statement, two important goals of the CAB are to improve two-way communication with SRS impacted communities and to ensure that stakeholders are given an opportunity to become involved in the decision-making processes of several agencies. They include the Department of Energy (DOE), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC), the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), and the SRS management. Two of the mechanisms used to accomplish these goals are briefings and presentations from DOE/EPA/SCDHEC/NRC/SRS staff and the CAB originated recommendations. Recommendations are the primary method for the CAB to formally communicate and thus follow a prescribed format that is described in the CAB's Standing Rules (Ref. 1).

The difficulty in developing valuable input from a broad group of stakeholders' stems from both the technical and unique nature of the work performed in the nuclear weapons complex industry as well as the necessity for security. Citizen input and participation are vital to any government agency's decision-making process. For the CAB to be the most effective and efficient in accomplishing its mission, it must have complete, accurate, timely, useful and useable information on Environmental Management (EM) areas where it has a responsibility to investigate and recommend action.

Due to the complex, unique nature of the often one-of-a-kind facilities at SRS, educational tours have been hosted by DOE/SRS for CAB members to provide a better understanding and comprehension of the complexities inherent in the activities at the SRS. Tours provide CAB members, and by its representation, the general public, with a unique understanding of site facilities, plans, operations, and challenges, which is central to providing DOE with informed and beneficial recommendations. In addition, the board experiences a normal level of turnover due to the EM-SSAB charter, which mandates a 6-year term limit. This has resulted in a steep learning curve for new members. This time-consuming process impacts the new members' (i.e., general public) ability to engage in and contribute to a timely manner towards the goals of the CAB.

**Comments**

As a means to help the CAB to more effectively achieve its mission, a need exists for a public outreach program to aid in the growth in numbers and knowledge of potential CAB members by offering on-site tours to appropriate locations. Further clarification of which facilities and areas can be or are open to tour, as well as how to engage interested members of the general public are needed. The CAB views tours as a highly useful tool for both the public and DOE to:

1. Explain how and where to get information about the site and its programs,
2. Introduce the professionals who are actively involved in cleanup, waste management, and natural resources management at the site.
3. Plan and give notice for public outreach activities, and
4. Provide a mechanism for a concrete experience that frames the environmental management of nuclear waste as an industry focused on safety.

**Recommendation #257  
Facility Tour Recommendation**

Incorporating the general public into on-site tours will: enhance their knowledge of the site's operations, accomplishments and new directions, expand the stakeholder base in communities that may lack access to information about the nuclear industry, increase their understanding of the role of the CAB in environmental management, and improve the effectiveness of the new CAB member who has already been introduced to the site.

**Recommendation**

The SRS CAB recommends that by March 2009 or sooner:

1. DOE formulate a strategy to offer on-site public tours to augment and expand the opportunities for the general public to begin their journey towards becoming an informed and involved stakeholders.
2. The site managers identify locations and routes that offer unique opportunities for the visitor to see the safe operations of the site.
3. Any on-site public tour program includes a plan to assess its effectiveness relative to the CAB mission.

**References**

1. Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board, Mission & Principles, Bylaws & Standing Rules, approved April 23, 2002.

**Agency Responses**

[Department of Energy-SR](#)