

June 6, 2006

MEMORANDUM TO: ACNW Members

FROM: Michael R. Snodderly, Chief /RA/
Technical Support Branch, ACRS/ACNW

SUBJECT: TRIP REPORT ON HEALTH PHYSICS SOCIETY'S TECHNICAL
SEMINAR ON HEALTH PHYSICS MAY 5, 2006 BY ACNW STAFF
LATIF HAMDAN

Attached is Dr. Hamdan's trip report on Savannah River Chapter of the Health Physics Society's 10th Annual Technical Seminar held in Augusta, Georgia on May 5, 2006.

Attachment: As stated

cc w/att: J. Larkins
A. Thadani
ACNW Staff
S. Jones, NMSS/PMDA
B. Sosa, EDO/AO/TRPS

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TRIP REPORT ON HEALTH PHYSICS SOCIETY'S TECHNICAL SEMINAR
ON HEALTH PHYSICS ASPECTS OF DEACTIVATION AND DECOMMISSIONING
MAY 5, 2006 BY ACNW STAFF LATIF HAMDAN

Latif Hamdan attended the Savannah River Chapter of the Health Physics Society's 10th Annual Technical Seminar held in Augusta, Georgia on May 5, 2006. The seminar covered health physics aspects of deactivation and decommissioning (D&D), mainly as they pertain to the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Savannah River Site (SRS). About 60 people attended, and most of the participants were from the SRS contractor staff.

The seminar included a total of ten presentations grouped in three topical categories: an "Overview" (2 presentations on the D&D process and the health physics aspects of D&D); "Technical Considerations" (6 presentations on the characterization process, in situ gamma spectroscopy applications, air sampling bioassay, verification statistical sampling, radio-analytical protocols, and environmental dosimetry and risk); and "Practical Applications" (2 presentations on D&D at SRS and the Rocky Flat site). We have electronic copies of all the handouts (this is a good resource for the ACNW members & staff).

Highlights, comments and observations:

- The seminar provided an excellent forum and venue for discussion of the D&D health physics issues, and for training of the SRS staff on the health physics and the regulatory framework for D&D.
- Health physics issues must always be considered in the evaluation of waste treatment and processing options.
- Despite differences, in general, the health physics issues at DOE sites are no different than similar issues at operational facilities.
- Different government agencies control and use different D&D approaches at different DOE tank waste sites: At the Hanford and Idaho National Lab sites, the State and/or EPA decide on approaches and controls, but DOE has complete control at the SRS.
- Existing wastes do not result in consistent waste streams. The waste characterization process does not always result in waste streams that fit a pre-established profile, as a result, surveys of entire facilities may sometimes be required.
- Sampling should target specific isotopes and locations; non-targeted sampling that involves all isotopes isn't appropriate, it is too expensive and takes too much time.
- The ALARA (as low as reasonably achievable) principles are practiced and encouraged, consistent with the NRC regulations.

- The goal at the SRS is to calculate the dose and evaluate the risk level, not to be conservative, the amount of TRU waste generated to date is small, it is not clear how the canyons and reactors will be decommissioned but the general approach is to keep it simple.
- The decommissioning of the Rocky Flats site provides good D&D lessons. The decommissioning of this site was characterized as having been effective, and has resulted in significant cost savings to DOE. The success of D&D at this site was attributed in large part to a good relationship and good communications between DOE and its contractor.