

**INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT
INSPECTION OF
ENVIRONMENT, SAFETY, AND HEALTH MANAGEMENT
AT THE SAVANNAH RIVER SITE**

VOLUME I

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2.1 Positive Attributes

Several positive attributes were identified in ISM implementation by EM/SR, NNSA/SRSO, and WSRC. Most work activities, particularly those involving higher hazards, were performed with a high regard for safety, and environmental programs were effective.

WSRC has established and implemented an effective, structured process to identify, evaluate, develop, communicate, and apply lessons learned from work activities and events. A rigorous, well-documented process provides for screening externally identified lessons learned as well as lessons learned from internal activities and events, analysis for applicability to SRS, determination of necessary corrective or preventive actions, and dissemination to affected organizations and workers. Effective application of lessons learned is facilitated by the well written, thorough analyses and preventive actions that are tailored to the conditions, organizations, and processes existing at SRS. Management support, dedicated coordinators and institutional level staff, rigorous documentation, continuous self-assessment, and user-friendly software and databases all contribute to an efficient, effective program. The effective lessons learned program is a noteworthy practice; other DOE sites may benefit from examining and adapting elements of the SRS lessons learned process.

Lessons Learned. WSRC has established and implemented a comprehensive, well documented lessons learned program, which is identifying, communicating and implementing many lessons learned, including lessons from external sources and those learned from SRS incidents and activities. The site level lessons learned staff continuously screens a large population of externally generated lessons from a variety of sources for applicability to SRS. Functional area managers and subject matter experts conduct further reviews of lessons identified during the initial screening before lessons are drafted and disseminated for information or action. The lessons reviewed and the resulting evaluations are documented in a comprehensive database. In CY 2003, WSRC issued 106 lessons learned to project/support lessons learned coordinators, including one Bulletin (for which DOE required a response), 9 Notifications (for which WSRC requires a formal response from projects/organizations), and 96 Special Information Notices (no response required from recipients). Twenty lessons learned from SRS events and work activities were forwarded to DOE to share with complex. Issued lessons learned are well written and comprehensive, and tailored to the processes, organizations, and activities at SRS.

When recipients are directed to take actions the feedback is documented in the site database, providing a means to efficiently collect information and assurance that the required actions are taken. The database provides potential users a comprehensive, searchable source for issued lessons, and links to national sources. Lessons learned coordinators responsible for the facilities and projects reviewed by the OA Team maintained records of internal reviews and actions, the generation of lessons learned for application within the line organization, and communication to the site or to the DOE complex. The coordinator for the H Tank Farm had developed a comprehensive and effective database to track evaluations and actions. OA verified that Tritium Facilities had entered all 10 CY2003 lessons learned from the site lessons learned coordinator that required feedback into their commitment tracking system and included detailed documentation of the results of inspections/analyses by facility SMEs/responsible managers. Documents in all line organizations reviewed by the OA team reflect that lessons learned are being routinely communicated to managers and workers. For several years, managers and lessons learned staff and coordinators have worked to continuously improve the effectiveness of the SRS lessons learned program through re-engineering of processes, self-assessment, and a currently ongoing improvement team.

Although a generally strong program, a few aspects of the lessons learned program could be more rigorous. Lessons learned that have limited rather than site-wide applicability, described by SRS as

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"Noteworthy", are sent only to the specific affected group SME or coordinator without any feedback or formal documentation of applicability reviews or actions taken. Many of the reviews documented by functional area manager and subject matter experts do not clearly indicate applicability to SRS (e.g., no definitive statements indicating what process or conditions would preclude the event from happening at SRS). The OA team identified several instances where lessons learned with potential generic applicability were developed and disseminated only within a project and not forwarded to the site coordinator for broader dissemination.

D.3 CONCLUSIONS

SR oversight is adequate in most respects and some elements are mature and effective, such as the FR program and the employee concerns program. However, some elements of SR assessments have been impacted by reorganizations and the processes are not fully adapted to the new organizational structure, particularly in AMCP. In addition, the SR self-assessment program is not functioning effectively across SR. SR has a good handle on the current weaknesses and appropriate actions to address them are ongoing or planned.

Some elements of SRSO oversight are adequate (e.g., FR coverage of tritium operations) and SRSO performs some assessments of WSRC tritium operations. However, SRSO oversight is not sufficiently comprehensive and does not adequately address construction activities. In addition, some FR assessments, self-assessments, and corrective action/commitment management, are not always implemented in accordance with some of the applicable site-specific requirements.

WSRC has established and implemented many effective feedback and improvement processes, which are resulting in continuous improvement in many areas and at all facilities evaluated by the OA team. WSRC has established and implemented the framework of a comprehensive safety assessment program comprised of safety inspections and walkthroughs, management work observations, topical self-assessments, functional area and facility/organizational management evaluations of performance, and rigorous and comprehensive independent assessments of facilities and organizations. WSRC has also established and implemented a comprehensive, well documented lessons learned program, an extensive and effective worker owned and management supported behavior based safety observation program, and an effective employee concerns program. However, the adequacy of some safety programs and performance may not be sufficiently evaluated because of weaknesses in assessment processes and implementation. WSRC has established a site-wide corrective action policy and safety issues are documented and evaluated with corrective actions developed, implemented, and tracked to closure; however, effective management of this critical feedback information is being hindered by process and implementation weaknesses. In addition, the causes of incidents resulting in injury and exposures are not always fully determined with appropriate determination of recurrence controls.

D.5 OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

WSRC

1. **Further strengthen Lessons Learned and employee concerns programs through additional guidance and increased rigor.** Specific actions to consider include:
 - Apply the established lessons learned analysis and documentation processes to the limited scope (e.g., “noteworthy”) lessons learned.
 - Add more structure to project/organizational lessons learned processes to encourage sharing of internal lessons learned across organizational boundaries. Provide incentives for sharing this information.
 - Establish more formal guidance and direction for the conduct of post job reviews, including completion of the AHA post job review form. Establish a formal review or monitoring process or regular self-assessments to encourage this feedback from workers and supervisors.
 - Apply additional rigor to documentation of employee concern investigation details and status in investigation packages.