

# CHG begins new conduct-of-operations initiative

Geoff Tyree, CHG

CH2M HILL Hanford Group is taking steps to further enhance the way it operates the tank farms with improvements to its conduct-of-operations program. CHG will soon provide new training to its tank-farms workforce, drawing on managers and first-line supervisors to present material on good practices for operations.

In the next few weeks, approximately 500 CHG employees, including nuclear chemical operators, health physics technicians and maintenance and program employees will begin to receive the training.

“The new training is an enhancement to the proven methods used to educate tank-farm employees, including existing training, day-to-day instruction and operational readiness reviews prior to specific projects in the field,” said Bill Ross, CHG vice president of Nuclear Operations. Ross is leading the conduct-of-operations improvement initiative.

“This training will give our employees the extra edge, and it will increase the margin of safety on this important work for the Department of Energy,” said Ross.

## Achieving excellence

The training was designed by grouping concepts in the tank farms *Conduct of Operations Manual* into modules that should take no longer than an hour each to complete. The modules will cover several functional areas identified by the Department of Energy for achieving excellence in the operation of DOE facilities.

The first module will cover communications and independent verification. Independent verification is a practice for ensuring that more than one person checks critical systems and equipment before use.

First-line supervisors and managers will present the modules to small groups of employees, using case studies. The material will include issues identified by past operations, “programmatic lessons learned” and the DOE occurrence notification system.

“We’ve had conduct-of-operations training on an individual basis,” said Ross. “This new initiative puts the operations managers in a leadership role to promote and foster improvements in CHG conduct of operations.”

## Learning from mistakes

One of the case studies on independent verification covers a situation in the early 1990s at a non-Hanford DOE facility where radioactive waste was transferred to the wrong tank. A trainee, under the supervision of a qualified operator, was lining up a waste transfer between tanks, which included ensuring that transfer valves were in the proper position. In this case, both the trainee and the operator failed to verify that a valve was closed, as required by procedure, and waste was sent to a third tank.

The inadvertent transfer did not cause any personnel injury or equipment damage. However, under different conditions and the mixing of different waste, more serious consequences could have occurred.

During conduct-of-operations training, tank farms employees will analyze the case studies and discuss how to prevent similar occurrences at Hanford’s tank farms. ♦



**Nuclear chemical operators, health physics technicians, maintenance personnel and other tank farms employees will soon receive new training in conduct of operations. The initiative by CH2M HILL Hanford Group will further enhance its efforts to safely store and retrieve millions of gallons of radioactive and hazardous waste for the DOE Office of River Protection.**