

Update on DNFSB Staff Activities in the Nuclear Air Cleaning Arena  
by  
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Since the last Nuclear Air Cleaning Conference the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) staff has been involved in numerous efforts regarding nuclear air cleaning at several Department of Energy facilities. These include, in part: encouraging the Department to finish and implement the Nuclear Air Cleaning Handbook; reminding DOE contractors of the June 4, 2001 letter by the Secretary of Energy relative to the testing of safety related HEPA filters at the Department's filter test facility; encouraging various new processing facilities to have an active confinement ventilation system vice a passive one; following up on potential additional leakage pathways and calculational inaccuracies for existing passive confinements; reviewing a proposed sand filter design for a plutonium facility; and, stressing the need for an adequately sized habitability safe haven system. Each of these will be briefly discussed. Please note that the views expressed here are solely the views of the author and do not reflect a DNFSB endorsement.

Nuclear Air Cleaning Implications of the Glovebox 8 Fire at Rocky Flats  
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On May 6, 2003 a fire occurred in the basement of Building 371 at the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site (RFETS) as workers were preparing to remove Glovebox 8 from the facility. The fire broke out after the workers began cutting a hole near the top of the glovebox for a ventilation flow path. The glovebox was contained inside a soft sided temporary enclosure. While the exact cause of the fire may never be known, there is no doubt that the use of cerium nitrate for decontamination played a significant role. After the onset of the fire, the workers attempted to put out the fire by adding water, an unwise action not sanctioned by procedures, and discharging ten or more fire extinguishers. The workers were dressed in bubble suits. Their actions put them and their fellow workers at grave potential risk. There were further questions regarding flow reversals, air sampling and the use of portable air cleaning units during this fire. Each of these will be briefly discussed. Please note that the views expressed here are solely the views of the author and do not reflect a DNFSB endorsement.