

News from the Savannah River Site

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SRS Responds to Train Derailment, Hydrochloric Acid Spill

AIKEN, S.C. (Feb. 20, 2015) – In the early morning hours of Tuesday, Jan. 27, within a matter of seconds, approximately 19,000 gallons of hydrochloric acid spilled onto the ground after a commercial railroad locomotive left the main track and slammed into a line of six railroad cars sitting on a short railroad spur near Allendale, S.C.

Soon after the collision, more than 10 different agencies, companies and organizations, including the FBI, began to mobilize and descend upon the scene near an industrial plant where the two engines and 15 cars had left the main track.

Per a mutual aid agreement with Allendale County, Department of Energy (DOE) contractor Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) dispatched several Savannah River Site (SRS) personnel to the location of the incident to begin the process of assessing and controlling immediate and secondary hazards associated with the release of hydrochloric acid and diesel fuel.

In addition to SRS Fire Department personnel, Savannah River National Laboratory's Atmospheric Technologies Group (ATG) assisted with efforts to identify potential environmental hazards associated with the train derailment caused by weather conditions forecasted for the area.

While hazardous conditions may have been present shortly after the accident, the ATG model showed that the cold morning temperatures and rapid evaporation



Savannah River Nuclear Solutions firemen decontaminate fellow hazmat technicians after returning from an entry into the scene of a train derailment to evaluate the level of hazards present.

of the released material minimized airborne hazards during the day while emergency responders were present.

One of the primary goals of the first of several entries by SRNS hazmat technicians into the swampy scene involved the task of turning off the still running locomotive engine.

Once the area was deemed safe for entry, rapid cleanup began under the supervision of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) to prevent chemical contamination in the Lower Three Runs swamp and wetlands area adjacent to the wreckage site from reaching the Savannah River.

A team of SRNS employees who are trained to respond to emergency events worked day-and-night to protect soils, water, equipment and the personnel involved in the cleanup response from chemicals released at the scene of the wreckage.

“From the standpoint of all the senior leadership at SRS, we’re very proud of the outstanding job SRNS employees did to respond swiftly, address immediate hazards and implement containment controls,” said Alice Doswell, SRNS Senior Vice President for Environmental Services and Safety and Health. “CSX, EPA, SCDHEC and the cleanup contractor were all complementary of the rapid response and support they received from SRNS. Their appreciation and acknowledgment of the specialized knowledge and professionalism of SRNS employees means a great deal to us as leaders in the nuclear industry.”

According to SRNS Fire Department Captain Heath Fisher, since the signing of the mutual aid agreement with Allendale County, SRNS personnel have responded to a wide variety of events within Allendale County, including the crash of an Air Force F-16 jet, two factory fires and another train derailment.

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions is a Fluor-led company whose members are Fluor Federal Services, Newport News Nuclear and Honeywell, responsible for the management and operations of the Department of Energy’s Savannah River Site, including the Savannah River National Laboratory, located near Aiken, South Carolina.

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SRNS- 2015 – 304