

Centers for Disease Control
National Institute for Occupational Safety and
Health
Advisory Board on Radiation and Worker Health
Pacific Proving Grounds Work Group
Friday, August 10, 2018

The Work Group convened via teleconference at 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time, James E. Lockey, Chair, presiding.

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Members Present:

James E. Lockey, Chair
Henry A. Anderson, Member
R. William Field, Member
Loretta R. Valerio, Member

Also Present:

Ted Katz, Designated Federal Official
Nancy Adams, NIOSH Contractor
Bob Barton, SC&A
Kathy Behling, SC&A
Jenny Lin Naylor, HHS
Jim Neton, DCAS
Gene Rollins, DCAS
Mark Rolfes, DCAS
John Stiver, SC&A

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Proceedings

(2:29 p.m.)

Roll Call/Welcome

Mr. Katz: Let's get started. This is the Advisory Board on Radiation and Worker Health. It's the Pacific Proving Grounds Work Group and we're finishing up on -- the Work Group has done most of the Site Profile review for the Pacific Proving Grounds. There's an issue that came up in a Board meeting last December which needed some follow-up, and that's what we're hearing about today.

And the material for that is a revised Site Profile document that will require a lot of explanation for people to understand what's been changed, but that will come in the meeting. And that's really all there is on the agenda, which is -- both the document and the agenda are posted on the NIOSH web site. They're under this program's scheduled meeting, today's date, so if you want to find the principle document that's being discussed today, it's there as well as -- again the agenda is very simple.

And I would just ask everyone on the line when you're not addressing the group to please keep your phones muted so that it's easier for everyone to understand everyone. And you press *6 to mute your phone and *6 to take your phone off of mute. So try to keep your phones on mute except for when you're talking.

We're talking about a specific site, so let's address conflict of interest while we're at it. For the Work Group members, Work Group members don't have conflicts for Work Groups that they sit on and they don't for this group. But we have Jim Lockey as the Chair and then we have Henry Anderson, Bill Field and Loretta Valerio as members, a couple of doctors in that.

So let's go onto roll call for the NIOSH ORAU Team.

(Roll call.)

Mr. Katz: Okay, then. I think that takes care of all the administrative matters.

And, Jim Lockey, it's your meeting.

Chair Lockey: Well, welcome, everybody. I don't think this meeting should last too long. Just to bring everybody up to date, Pacific Proving Grounds has been granted an SEC, so really we're looking at the Site Profile in relationship to non-SEC cancers. In the past one of the issues was 24-hour exposure. So the 250-working-day limit as opposed to the 24-hour issue. It's been cut back to 83 24-hour period of time. So that was resolved.

This last issue was defined by Jim Neton really in his email, and that is in relationship to an issue that was raised by Dr. Melius at one of our past Board meetings in regard to how we reconstruct coworker exposure. And I think the Site Profile was updated after the review of the 57,000 individual badges to come up with a better coworker empirical 95 percent confidence interval.

So I think that's the gist of the matter here, and Stu is going to review the most recent changes to the Site Profile.

Dr. Neton: Yes, this is Jim. I can go over that, if you'd like.

Chair Lockey: Okay. Thanks.

Updated Site Profile for PPG - Addressing ABRWH Co-Worker Dose Reconstruction Issue

Dr. Neton: I've got a couple of experts on the phone that can correct me if I'm wrong or have any difficult questions.

What happened here was that the original Site Profile; that would have been Rev 1, or the earlier Site Profile, Revision 1, did not have a true coworker model in the sense that it didn't have individual

badge readings, but it relied on sort of categorical bin data where we had four or five bins of exposures listed, like 0 to 100 millirem, 100 to 500 millirem, that sort of thing.

So we really didn't have individual badge results. And because of that SC&A had some findings related to that and they pointed to the fact that this did not really include missed dose. There were other issues related to cohort badging and those sort of things. And that was reflected in Findings 3, 4, 8 and 9, which were originally closed by the Work Group.

But as Dr. Lockey pointed out, Dr. Melius noticed that this one statement in the resolution of the findings said that given the intractable nature of said limitations we believe that the use of the 95th percentile is okay. And in his comment, which was correct, was what was intractable and what do you mean you can do it?

And so I took the task to go back and look at what we had, and at the end of the day I made the decision with Tim Taulbee's input that we actually go back and collect all of the badge data that was in DOE's possession at -- in Nevada, at the Nevada Test Site, code them and develop a coworker model based on the sum of all the badge results which would include missed dose, and it takes away the cohort badging issue, and it was just a much cleaner solution.

As Dr. Lockey pointed out, that involved coding about 57,000 badges results. We've done that. We now have a coworker model for each individual test shot or operation as they might call it that covers the time frame from 1946 to '62. And we believe that this has addressed the issues that were raised by Dr. Melius at that Board meeting. That's pretty much it in a nutshell. We can answer any questions that anyone might have.

Chair Lockey: Jim, this is Dr. Lockey. Going through 57,000 film badges is -- I don't know if you have any other databases that are as exacting as this database may be for non-SEC cancers. That's pretty amazing.

Dr. Neton: Yes. Well, it turns out every time we would request badge results from the claimants, then they would send us a summary sheet that was able - - it would point where they were in the summary sheet. And we decided, well, instead of going to them, going to the well every time, just bring the well to us. And that's what we've done.

Chair Lockey: Well, that was the main issue and it's my understanding when I read through the Site Profile and the changes that have been signed off on -- I think that this issue has been adequately addressed. I'd like to hear what other Board Members think.

Henry?

Member Anderson: Sorry. That's fine.

Chair Lockey: I didn't hear what you said, Henry.

Member Anderson: Oh, I don't have any specific issues on this.

Chair Lockey: Okay. Loretta?

Member Valerio: Can you hear me okay?

Mr. Katz: Yes.

Member Valerio: I didn't have any questions. No, I don't have any questions.

Chair Lockey: Okay. And, Bill, you still there?

Member Field: Yes, I think it sounds good. My first question was just a representative of the database, but my goodness, it looks like quite the database. I think it's a good strategy to deal with the issue.

Chair Lockey: Good. Okay. So what I hear is from the Board members that we can accept the revised Site Profile as signed off on, and I think everybody concurs with that.

Mr. Katz: Yes. So, Jim and I previewed this issue

with Dr. Lockey, but not with the rest of you Board members. You haven't been involved with the Work Group meetings this week, all of you. But we had an INL Work Group meeting earlier this week. That INL Work Group meeting is going to result in discussion at the Board meeting, but not actioning it. Give us more time so we have some time we can peel away from that session to create just a very brief session. I think that's all we'll need, but we'll give you half an hour just in case there's a lot of Board questions about this. But -- and this can get presented at the upcoming Board meeting.

It's not on the agenda right now, but I'll put it on a new agenda, public agenda and send a proposed one so that the public will be aware that this would be on there. I think that's okay with Dr. Lockey and presumably with the rest of you on the Work Group. And we can get this behind us. So sounds good.

Chair Lockey: I'm good with that, Ted. We can sign off on this and close this out then.

Mr. Katz: So I think, I mean, if you want to just -- sort of similar to this, but maybe with a little more words just because this Work Group's more familiar with it than the whole Board. If you could just introduce Jim, I think Jim can very informally update the rest of the Board and -- for the session and you don't need actually a PowerPoint presentation unless Jim actually wants to do that, but -- and that --

(Simultaneous speaking.)

Chair Lockey: I'm fine with that.

Jim, are you okay with making a brief presentation?

Dr. Neton: Sure. Yes, absolutely.

Chair Lockey: I appreciate that. The Board does, too.

Dr. Neton: I might not do a PowerPoint because it's a pretty simple issue

and --

Mr. Katz: Yes.

Dr. Neton: -- I think I can convey the message to the Board without any fancy slides.

Chair Lockey: Perfect.

Member Anderson: What you might do is just put up a quick timeline, so one-page PowerPoint as to how -
-

Dr. Neton: Yes, I could maybe -- a brief summary of where we -- what occurred and --

Member Anderson: I just remember going through the INL stuff yesterday. A lot of the -- while it's a simple issue, it is helpful just to remind people where we are in this process, and it doesn't need to be much.

Dr. Neton: Okay. I can do that.

Mr. Barton: If I may, could I -- I don't know if I'm out of line here. This is Bob Barton. Could I ask you a question about the revision, if it's all right?

Chair Lockey: Sure.

Mr. Barton: One thing I did notice, Jim, that with the new coworker model one of the modifications since we had that coworker model now was the ability to prorate the assigned coworker doses, or the 95th percentile as it were, based on time spent during the actual operation in that. You didn't have to actually apply the entire operation if the person was not actually there for the entire operation, which makes perfect sense.

I guess my question was how that process would actually work in being able to identify when a person was only there for a partial operation versus a full operation, because I know we've come across in the past -- especially at PPG it can be especially difficult to even establish employment periods. So I would

be remiss if I didn't mention it.

Just seeing that there I was wondering how that would work. Would it be based solely on the DOL-covered employment or would that be -- would the dose reconstructor do additional research to determine that credible evidence exists that they were only there for a partial operation? Because that is something that popped out at least for me as being different in the TBD revision.

Dr. Neton: Yes, I'd probably have to rely on Gene Rollins to maybe help address that issue, but I don't know that we would do anything other than rely on the DOL's employment at the Pacific Proving Grounds.

Mr. Rollins: This is Gene Rollins. The records are fairly concise about when people came and left the proving ground. That part has not been difficult to determine. And most of the time it does match up pretty well with the DOL records.

Mr. Barton: Okay. I just -- I know in the past SC&A has actually -- and, Ted, you may even remember this. It was way back in 2015. We had taken a look at where we had noticed that for some covered employment periods it would be based -- it would only be a day or two employment based on the issue date of a single badge or something like that, and we had expressed concern. Now of course, I mean, this is no knock on anybody. Just trying to establish employment out there is a very, very difficult task.

So I don't know if NIOSH has seen that memo, but I would caution -- and maybe this has changed in the interim three or four years and it's not an issue anymore to be able to identify the actual dates while they were out there, but I know at least as far back as 2015 we had example cases where the Energy employees were only being credited with a single day of employment, which is unlikely considering where the PPG is and how far away it is and the logistics to get people out there and such.

Mr. Stiver: Yes, Bob, if I could jump in for a second. We saw this a lot when I was working on the NTPR program for SAIC, especially in the early operations where they just had -- didn't have complete badges. They were just mission badges. And so unless you had the ship deck logs from the ships that were bringing the people in -- you'd really nail it down to an exact time frame. But, and if you just rely on the issue date of the badge and it didn't necessarily have -- a single-day badge didn't have a turn-in date. Then we wound up with that situation you're describing that we put into the memo.

So a question I had, too, is whether that has been addressed and just how that's being done. I guess that may be more of a question for Labor than for you guys.

Chair Lockey: Yes, it would I think it would be a Department of Labor issue. I don't know if we can resolve that.

Dr. Neton: Yes, covered employment is really not our bailiwick here.

Mr. Stiver: Yes, I'd just never seen that that had been addressed and I was kind of curious as to how it was dispositioned.

Mr. Katz: Well, so this is Ted. I just wonder if it wouldn't be appropriate to get in sort of concert with putting this Site Profile to work if sending Labor a note about this specifically since it has the potential to have some impact on people's dose reconstructions. They may have been notified about this previously; I kind of doubt it though, through the deliberations. I kind of doubt it.

So, Jim, does that seem like a reasonable thing to do, but to -- at least you could -- we could forward the previous SC&A memo and Labor would be aware that this isn't an issue for some cases?

Chair Lockey: I think that's very appropriate --

Dr. Neton: Yes, I don't know.

Chair Lockey: -- just having dealt with the 83-day versus 250-day also.

Mr. Katz: Yes, Jim Neton, I guess what do you think? Is that --

Dr. Neton: Yes, I don't know. I'm not as familiar with PPG as -- and I probably should be. I don't recall this exact issue and I don't recall a memo. So I'd have to do some research to find out what transpired in that, but I really still don't think it's -- it's probably good to notify them that we had a concern in the past, or still have, but, yes, again, I don't know that it's our -- under our control to establish covered employment at PPG.

Mr. Katz: I'm not suggesting that. I'm just suggesting that, like I said, that we'd notify them and share the memo with them so they're aware that there was a concern about this from our contractor to the Board.

Dr. Neton: Yes. No, that could be done.

Mr. Katz: Yes, I just think that it would be the responsible thing to do and then it's -- again, it is up to Labor to deal with these kind of matters.

Mr. Stiver: Okay. Well, we still have that memo. I can go ahead and just email --

Mr. Katz: Yes, if you'll -- John, if you'll send it to me. I mean, let's --

Mr. Stiver: Yes.

Mr. Katz: I'll wait until after the Board meeting, but -- and I'm happy to send that to Labor with a note either way, or NIOSH, either way.

Mr. Stiver: Okay. Sounds good.

Mr. Katz: And thank you for raising that.

Adjourn

Chair Lockey: Any other issues anybody has?

(No audible response.)

Chair Lockey: Ted, then I think we're done.

Mr. Katz: That was very efficient. Thank you, everyone. Have a good day and a good weekend, everybody.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 2:48 p.m.)