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**Pacific Northwest Laboratory
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AUTHORIZATION FOR CHANGE IN PROCESS

234-5 BUILDING

ARGON PURGING OF REDUCTION EQUIPMENT

Classification Control Document To

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By Authority of CG-PR-2

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Present Procedure

The present procedure for replacing air in the Task III reduction equipment with an inert atmosphere includes three successive evacuation and argon introduction cycles.

Revised Procedures

A new procedure is authorized by approval signatures to this document which permits the formation of an inert atmosphere within the reduction equipment by introducing argon to a pressure of 100 psig, then releasing the gas to atmospheric pressure. In addition, the number of purge cycles required for either vacuum or pressure procedure is changed from three to "one or more".

Basis For Procedure Change

Production Test 235-8 (HW-25362), which was written to evaluate the argon pressure procedure for air purging in production equipment, has been completed. The slag and metal buttons produced using this procedure were comparable to the slag and metal produced by the vacuum procedure.

Adoption of this procedure will permit equipment simplification by eliminating the vacuum pump, vacuum instrumentation, and some valves in the Task III, RMA Line. This simplification will result in savings in operator's time and maintenance costs without introduction of radiation or physical hazards.

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Approvals

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