

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

January 17, 2003

TO: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: Tim Hunt, Oak Ridge Site Cognizant Engineer
SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending January 17, 2003

Staff member Don Owen was on site this week providing site representative coverage.

A. BWXT Y-12 Enriched Uranium Operations (EUO) Wet Chemistry Restart Preparations: The final report of the second contractor operational readiness review (CORR II) for wet chemistry operations in Building 9212 was issued this week. Resolution of the pre-start findings is in progress. The secondary extraction (SX) system was not demonstrated during CORR II due to one of the two qualified operators being out on medical leave. The SX system demonstration is now planned for the week of January 20th. This demonstration will be followed by a BWXT Y-12 readiness recommendation and an NNSA Y-12 Site Office (YSO) decision on the YSO operational readiness review, still planned to start on January 27th. (2-A)

B. BWXT Y-12 Building 9204-4: As previously reported (see October 18th, November 8th, and December 6th reports), there was a near-miss occurrence during a machining operation which involved the energetic ejection of a 150 pound steel object. A BWXT Y-12 investigation team issued its report in November 2002. This week, actions were established responding to the investigation report; including establishment of an engineering technical authority for each unit type, formal design agency review of hazard controls, improvement of processes for information exchange with the design agencies, and reinforcement of Job Hazard Analysis training. These actions are to serve as interim measures until additional improvements associated with Recommendation 2002-2, *Weapons Laboratory Support of the Defense Nuclear Complex*, are fully developed and implemented. (2-C)

C. BWXT Y-12 EUO Reduction: Reduction run #5, originally scheduled for October 2002, was in progress this week. The site representative observed the reactor vessel loading and preparation evolution which was generally conducted in accordance with the procedure and conduct of operations principles; however, the site representative observed an unauthorized valve operation during the initial vacuum purge to the reactor vessel. The local vacuum pressure gage indicated no vacuum. Without informing the supervisor or obtaining his authorization, an operator checked open the gage isolation valve (i.e., rotated the valve handle counterclockwise) and thereby improperly changed the position of the valve. The site representative discussed this issue with the supervisor, EUO management, and YSO personnel who agreed that authorization should be obtained prior to operating any valve – including a gage valve – not addressed by procedure. EUO management indicated that this issue is being addressed with EUO operations personnel. This gage isolation valve should have been in the open position as part of normal system alignment. It was subsequently determined that the valve had been replaced several months ago but was left isolated. EUO management is performing further review of this configuration management issue. (2-A)

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