

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 23, 2025

TO: Technical Director
FROM: Oak Ridge Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Oak Ridge Activity Report for Week Ending May 23, 2025

Y-12 Field Office (YFO): The YFO manager announced the selection of a new deputy manager for the Y-12 Field Office. The YFO deputy manager position, as well as several key YFO management roles, has been filled with acting managers for the past ten months. The new deputy manager was selected internally and currently serves as the assistant manager for programs and projects. Although YFO has filled the deputy manager role, several other YFO management staff will continue in their acting roles as multiple positions remain vacant.

Building 9212: CNS conducted an event investigation after discovering that a container processed inside a glovebox contained fissile material intermixed with plastic. Plastic, which acts as a moderator when intermixed with fissile material, is not permitted by the processing glovebox criticality safety evaluation (CSE), rendering this loading non-compliant. Chemical operators generated the container while sorting a drum of filter media earlier in the fiscal year, a process permitted by the CSE for that evolution. However, the chemical operators did not indicate on the label that the container contained plastic material. Later, the container was transferred into a glovebox for processing. Chemical operators opened the container in the processing glovebox, recognized that the non-compliant loading, established an administrative boundary, and notified supervision and nuclear criticality safety (NCS). NCS personnel provided guidance to strain the plastic from the fissile material and remove it from the glovebox. The CNS procedure governing the resolution of NCS deficiencies permits handling material in a non-compliant condition under NCS guidance, but only for actions necessary to ensure safe conditions. CNS assigned a formal action to evaluate whether straining the material exceeded procedural allowances.

Facility Operations Management (FOM): Y-12 FOM has undergone several organizational changes over the past year. As part of those changes, FOM established a Shift Technical Advisor (STA) position in Building 9995, the plant lab. A resident inspector observed the final qualification oral board for the first candidate to qualify as the Building 9995 STA. CNS continued the beneficial practice of having a FOM manager observe the oral board's conduct. The FOM manager provided feedback to the board members on its administration to help ensure consistency between facilities.

Building 9995: The site experienced a momentary on-site power perturbation during a severe storm when a tree fell, damaging a power line. CNS determined that the momentary power perturbation was not sufficient to impact most criticality accident alarm systems (CAAS) at nuclear facilities; however, they were unable to confirm that Building 9995 detectors were unaffected. The shift manager entered the applicable limiting condition for operations (LCO), performed the required LCO actions, and exited the LCO once surveillances confirmed CAAS operability. CNS filed an occurrence report for the degradation of a safety system, as they were unable to confirm extent of the power loss.