

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

September 17, 1999

TO: G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director
FROM: Paul F. Gubanc and David T. Moyle, Oak Ridge Site Representatives
SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending September 17, 1999

Outside Expert R. West was at Y-12 for the completion of the LMES readiness assessment (RA) of the enriched uranium (EU) reduction process. Staff members Massie, B. Jones and Zavadoski were at ORNL this week to review Building 3019 ventilation and U-233 inspection program readiness. Staff members Hunt, Tontodonato and Troan visited Y-12 to review Building 9206 deactivation.

A. Reduction Process at Y-12 Enriched Uranium Operations (EUO): The LMES RA was completed this week and findings were transmitted to EUO management. LMES management believes that the RA identified no major issues and expects to declare process readiness soon. DOE line management verification of readiness is ongoing and has identified several additional concerns which have been forwarded to EUO management. DOE line management has expressed some uncertainty in allowing the independent DOE RA to begin without adequate closure of LMES RA and DOE findings to date. The independent DOE RA is scheduled to begin October 12. (II-B.2)

B. ORNL Building 3019: The staff's review at ORNL Building 3019 this week identified:

1. The U-233 canister inspection chamber is ventilated through ducting which runs adjacent to the work area and is unfiltered until well outside the facility. Any material released from a canister during inspection could redeposit in the ducting. These deposits could make the work area a high radiation area and would be very difficult to remove. The staff strongly encouraged ORNL to address this potential hazard prior to commencing the inspections.
2. On July 27, a swivel eyebolt failed during lifting of the 4700 lb U-233 transfer cask. Investigation revealed overstressing was caused by inappropriate use of the swivel eyebolts for tie-down purposes prompted by poor cask design (no tie-down attachments) and management pressure to move the cask the day of the occurrence. ORNL corrective actions beyond Building 3019 are still not fully developed, lack rigor and only superficially influence ORNL as a whole. (ORNL is highly compartmentalized; ISM was implemented by creating 36 separate ISM plans.)
3. Due to findings from its management self-assessment, ORNL has delayed the contractor ORR several weeks until mid-October. Based on the staff's review, this appears appropriate. (III-A.1)

C. Oak Ridge Emergency Management (EM): On July 8, the Board sent DOE a letter which identified the need for improvement in EM at Oak Ridge. On Monday, the site reps participated in a staff video conference with DOE-OR to review their EM corrective action plan.

1. With the exception of caveats by LMES as a result of the recent reduction-in-force (RIF), all the prime contractors are currently on schedule with their corrective actions. LMES expects to complete a review of RIF impacts on their EM corrective actions by September 24.
2. In several areas (e.g., training, drills), DOE-OR is still operating in a "stovepiped" fashion with line organizations each reviewing their own work; significant variability was noted. The staff encouraged DOE-OR to use a more synergistic, team-based approach in its reviews.
3. The staff emphasized that DOE-OR needed a rigorous change control process on its EM program to assure recent, hard-fought gains were not undone without equally rigorous justification.

A followup review is planned for early 2000, after most of the corrective actions are completed. (I-A)

cc: Board Members