

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

January 5, 2001

TO: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: Paul F. Gubanc and David T. Moyle, Oak Ridge Site Representatives
SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending January 5, 2001

The office was closed Monday for the New Year's Day holiday.

A. Y-12 Disassembly: In September 2000, the Board formally communicated its concerns with preparations for an upcoming disassembly campaign. On December 21, BWXT proposed to YAO a modified approach to performing the disassembly process. Mr. Gubanc's review identified:

1. BWXT's written proposal poorly presents the safety, security, reliability and potential life-cycle cost benefits of the proposed approach. In fact, the immediate cost and schedule impacts provided in the letter appear grossly excessive, almost inviting a negative response.
2. Based on a walkdown with the cognizant engineer, the proposed approach appears to offer many benefits, avoiding some of our safety concerns. Additionally, much of the tooling and operational steps would become very similar to those tools and processes previously analyzed and in regular use on another active campaign. This should facilitate easier and improved procedure writing, operator training, safety analysis, tool design, and equipment testing.
3. Due to the holidays, the NNSA Y-12 Area Office (YAO) has just started its review of the proposal and the purported improvements will need to be verified.

A Board staff visit to status this new disassembly campaign is planned for late January. (2-A)

B. Building 9212 B-1 Wing Fire Protection: On December 15, 2000, BWXT issued a letter to YAO proposing their approach for fire protection in unsprinklered areas of B-1 Wing. The premise of this letter relies on a June 7 letter from the previous contractor which concluded that sprinkler system installation would be a line item project and could not support plans for wet chemistry restart. As a result, BWXT is proposing to administratively manage B-1 Wing fire risks, by implementing 33 compensatory measures for wet chemistry operations plus an additional 5 measures during testing. In parallel, BWXT intends to pursue a line item project to sprinkle the remainder of B-1 Wing. YAO has not yet made a decision on the BWXT proposal, but would be well served to reevaluate the premise and its basis. The administrative burden in tracking and implementing over 30 controls for several years could be substantial, especially if a more cost effective, reliable, and technically logical solution could be implemented in the short term. (1-C, 2-A)

C. ORNL Building 3019: This week, Building 3019 facility management identified and reported that a fire deluge system in 3019 had been disabled since last October. Fortunately, this fire system is not a credited safety system and protects a canyon cell (#7) which contains deenergized and emptied process equipment which presents a low fire hazard. ORNL Fire Protection Engineering, which originally isolated the system and enacted a compensatory measure for the Fire Department, did appropriately notify the facility at the time of the actions they had taken. However, facility personnel did not elevate this to higher management nor was the incapacitated condition reflected in an appropriate tracking system. As a result, line management was not fully cognizant of one of their safety-related systems. We'll inquire into this event and facility corrective actions further next week. (1-C, 3-A)

cc: Board Members