

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 25, 2002

TO: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: Tim Hunt, Y-12 Site Cognizant Engineer
SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending October 25, 2002

Staff member D. Owen was on site this week providing Site Representative coverage.

A. BWXT Y-12 Enriched Uranium Operations (EUO) Wet Chemistry: As reported last week, the contractor operational readiness review (CORR) team concluded that the wet chemistry operation was not ready for startup due to inadequate readiness preparations. This week, EUO management conducted a review of the history of the readiness preparation effort to assist in determining areas for improvement and/or needing management attention. Among factors discussed were: (1) the need to justify performing simulations as part of cold operations, annotate in detail those portions of procedures that may be simulated, and identify measures to be taken to compensate for the simulations; (2) the high turnover rate of operations personnel during the past several months; (3) the short amount of time that was made available for practicing certain operations due to equipment failures and late development of procedures; and (4) the lack of adequate participation by process/system engineers in procedure development, verification and validation.

BWXT Y-12 senior management formally informed NNSA-YSO that they concur with the CORR team's conclusion and that another CORR will be performed. BWXT Y-12 noted that a detailed path forward will be determined by mid-November, following a senior management review. The CORR is not expected to start until December.

The site rep inquired with NNSA-YSO and EUO management about the planned use of the observations provided by the Board's October 3, 2002, letter on inadequate conduct of operations and training for the CORR. Indications are that the observations will be reviewed in detail to ensure any necessary corrective actions are implemented prior to the next CORR. NNSA-YSO management also expressed that NNSA is planning a formal response to the Board's letter. (2-B)

B. BWXT Y-12 Building 9204-4: As reported last week, there was a near-miss occurrence during a machining operation which involved the ejection of a 150 lb. steel object from a lathe. Following an NNSA-YSO request, BWXT Y-12 appointed a team to conduct an investigation of this occurrence. The investigation team is looking at the application of Integrated Safety Management (ISM) to this operation. Questions about the adequacy of the activity-level hazard analysis and design agency involvement/support are being evaluated. A change from prior operations in the scope of work appears not to have been captured by the hazard analysis. A draft report of the investigation is expected by November 7, 2002. (2-C)

C. BWXT Y-12 EUO E-Wing: The site rep toured E-Wing as a follow-up to recent criticality safety/conduct of operations violations (see the October 11, 2002 report) involving fissile material handling activities. EUO management continues to address recovery actions including procedure reviews and performing restart operations with independent management oversight. About half of the suspended activities have resumed normal operations. (2-A)