

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 7, 2008

TO: Timothy Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: Donald Owen and David Kupferer, Oak Ridge Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Activity Report for Week Ending November 7, 2008

Mr. Owen was out of the office on Thursday and Friday.

Conduct of Operations: In response to operational errors that occurred in August, B&W committed to take several actions intended to improve both conduct of operations and procedures (see the 10/24/08 site rep. report). B&W has completed short-term actions such as conducting additional training for operations personnel, performing a 30-day procedure review to identify potential procedural enhancements, and producing conduct of operations related metrics. B&W is still developing plans to perform more detailed reviews of procedures and training programs. This week, YSO sent a letter to B&W that asserted the Site Office is not convinced that the root causes of the operational events are being addressed. YSO has formally requested a briefing by B&W to provide a status of the aforementioned actions with an emphasis on procedure compliance and efforts being taken to ensure that procedures are appropriate for the tasks being performed.

Wet Chemistry Operations. Last week, a YSO Facility Representative in the Enriched Uranium Operations Building identified an unexpected accumulation of dibutyl carbitol in an inactive (but presently in-service) organic reservoir for the primary extraction process. The building safety basis controls the quantity of organics in the area to limit the size of any fire; as such, unexpected accumulations could affect safety basis compliance. The accumulation, which was estimated to be approximately 2 liters, did not result in a safety basis violation and has been subsequently drained. This inactive reservoir (a tall glass column) is connected to an active reservoir. There are valves between the reservoirs that are locked in the closed position. The cause of the accumulation is unknown at this time. B&W is evaluating the need for keeping this reservoir in-service and is evaluating other wet chemistry systems for unintended accumulations of process fluids.

Quality Evaluation Relocation: Since mid-2007, B&W has been relocating the octagonal glovebox from the Quality Evaluation Building to the Assembly/Disassembly Building (see the 6/15/07 site rep. report). All sections of the octagonal glovebox have been relocated and assembled. System testing is in progress and practice operations are anticipated to start next week. The B&W Readiness Assessment is planned for December.

High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) Filters: In response to a 3/18/08 Board letter, DOE Headquarters committed to develop and document a tailored testing program for HEPA filters used in confinement ventilations systems throughout the DOE complex. YSO recently informed DOE Headquarters that 100 percent of the HEPA filters used at Y-12 (both safety and non-safety related) are tested at the Filter Test Facility.

Work Hour Change: Last month, the Atomic Trades and Labor Council accepted a contract extension that included establishing a 4 day x 10 hour workweek schedule for member employees. This week was the first week that union members worked the 4 x 10 schedule. Most other B&W and YSO employees had already been working the 4 x 10 schedule.