

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

January 2, 2026

TO: Technical Director
FROM: Oak Ridge Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Oak Ridge Activity Report for Week Ending January 2, 2026

Staff Activities: Y-12 and OREM nuclear facilities operated at a significantly reduced operational tempo with reduced staff due to the holiday.

Building 9720-5: CNS submitted a request to YFO to downgrade the criticality accident alarm system (CAAS) for Building 9720-5 from a safety significant system credited in the safety basis, to a system that is no longer credited in the safety basis but still provides a level of risk protection defined by the criticality safety program. CNS issued a report with the request titled “Safety Designation of the Criticality Accident Alarm System” that provides a regulatory and technical basis for the downgrade based on the CAAS not providing a preventive or mitigative function for potential criticality events. CNS determined that CAAS serves as a programmatic emergency management function by alerting personnel to evacuate in situations involving a potential nuclear criticality accident. CNS based this determination on the definition of a safety class or safety significant system per 10 CFR 830, *Nuclear Safety Management*, the requirements in Y-12 procedures, and ANSI/ANS consensus standard 8.3-1997, *Criticality Accident Alarm System*. CNS concluded that CAAS is similar to the function smoke alarms perform to alert personnel to take protective actions for fires. Based on a review of the criticality safety program in place at Building 9720-5, the resident inspectors understand the logic with the downgrade of the system in that building since the container size and loading limits ensure packaging and spacing requirements are maintained throughout the facility.

Transuranic Waste Processing Center: UCOR is investigating the cause of an arc flash that occurred in an air handling unit controller contactor. The controller is not within the safety-basis-credited ventilation system; however, it is located on the roof of the processing building. The arc flash catastrophically damaged the controller contactor and melted the controller contactor immediately above it. The event occurred during the weekend, and the damaged contactor was not discovered until the air handling unit was found not to be running the following Monday morning. UCOR is developing formal corrective actions to address the issue, and is evaluating the preemptive replacement of similar contactors.