

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 13, 2026

TO: Technical Director
FROM: Oak Ridge Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Oak Ridge Activity Report for Week Ending March 13, 2026

Building 9212: A resident inspector (RI) observed the management self-assessment of calciner operations being conducted in preparation for readiness activities (see 3/6/2026 report). The demonstrations included a response to a simulated abnormal operating condition that required shift manager participation and a limiting condition for operation entry. During the observation, a can lid from a separate concurrent evolution fell from the level above and struck the floor. CNS filed an occurrence report for a near miss and plans to hold an event investigation on the issue.

Building 9204-2E: CNS issued a work package to replace a failed horn in the new criticality accident alarm system this week. An RI attended the pre-job briefing and reviewed the work package, post-maintenance test, and associated procedure. The RI determined that the work package did not directly link to the procedure needed for the operation of the system or to the method to test it after the horn replacement. The RI discussed these issues with the system engineer and operations manager, who subsequently paused the work to revise the work package. CNS would benefit from additional oversight during first-use operations to ensure work packages invoke, and properly align with, the guiding procedures (see 2/27/2026 report).

YFO Oversight: YFO issued the first-period triannual issues management meeting (TIMM) report. Two emerging items of interest (EII) include “Untimely and Ineffective Corrective Actions” and “CNS Maintenance Performance Measures”, carried forward from previous TIMM reports. YFO identified the EII about corrective actions to address the misalignment between CNS and YFO on the way issues are categorized and subsequently resolved. CNS plans to conduct a focus-group session with YFO subject matter experts to gather feedback enabling procedural changes that will address the disconnect. The YFO maintenance program manager will hold the other EII open until CNS submits an efficiency roadmap that addresses the final concern related to the lack of control of maintenance cost-performance measures. Resolution of these EIIs will enable YFO to perform oversight in a more effective manner, with clear expectations and trackable results.

National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA): NNSA released the Performance Evaluation Report for CNS’s performance during fiscal year 2025. The evaluation was released as part of NNSA’s annual review of management and operating contractors across the nuclear security enterprise. NNSA uses the yearly Performance Evaluation and Measurement Plan to assess performance and assign scores. CNS received a score of 92. NNSA pointed to several CNS achievements as justification for the high score, such as the downgrade of Building 9206 from a **hazard category 2** nuclear facility to a classification of **below hazard category 3**, and the completion of site separation from Pantex ahead of the original baseline schedule (see 4/5/2024 report). NNSA also recognized several areas for improvement. For example, NNSA stated that attention is needed to address fundamental weaknesses in maintenance performance. In addition, NNSA noted that the backlog of fire-protection compensatory measures is unacceptably high, negatively impacting the Fire Protection Program effectiveness.