

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

January 21, 2005

TO: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: R. Todd Davis/Donald Owen, Oak Ridge Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Activity Report for Week Ending January 21, 2005

A. Oxide Conversion Facility. YSO review of closure of contractor Operational Readiness Review (ORR) findings and other YSO review activities were completed this week. The YSO Manager (the startup authority) has authorized the NNSA ORR to start on January 24th.

On Friday, the site rep. observed an emergency preparedness demonstration of a hydrogen fluoride (HF) release that was also observed by YSO and NNSA ORR personnel. The scenario included damage to an HF cylinder valve resulting in a gaseous HF release with a concurrent head injury to an Oxide Conversion Facility (OCF) worker. Evaluation of the demonstration is in progress, but a potential weakness in locating certain response personnel in areas downwind or near downwind from the plume is under consideration.

As reported last week, training and practice of test procedures (not the normal operating procedures) intended for initial OCF operation with hazardous materials had been completed following the contractor ORR. The site reps. note, however, that the NNSA ORR activity schedule issued on Friday did not include a demonstration of the test procedures. This is contrary to the intention previously stated by YSO management to the site reps. (see 11/19/04 site rep. report). The site reps. have inquired on the basis for not demonstrating the test procedures during the NNSA ORR.

B. YSO Facility Representative Staffing and Training. The Board's letter of May 14, 2004 noted a lack of activity-specific training and staffing deficiencies with NNSA Facility Representatives (FRs) at NNSA sites. YSO recently provided their response on these issues to NNSA Headquarters. The result of the FR staffing analysis using the method developed by NNSA indicates that a shortage of at least two full-time employees (FTEs) exists (YSO currently has nine full-time FRs). YSO noted, however, that three additional FRs currently serving in other YSO positions (but maintaining their FR qualification) can be used to partially address the analyzed shortage. As a result, YSO recommended that one additional FTE be pursued.

Regarding FR training, YSO procedures and the FR qualification standard have been revised based on the guidance developed by NNSA. YSO will develop and conduct FR continuing training to address new or changed activities or hazards.

C. Plant Facility Safety Committee. In September 2004, BWXT established the Plant Facility Safety Committee (PFSC) to provide oversight and periodic review of the Y-12 facility safety program (see 9/17/04 site rep. report), in particular, nuclear safety and authorization basis. This week, the PFSC began field assessments for an in-depth review of several aspects of the Y-12 facility safety program. The main topics that will be reviewed include: compliance with 10 CFR 830; training and qualification; safety program implementation; feedback and improvement; and facility safety program management. The team plans to complete their field assessments next week. The final report will be issued by late-February.