

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 6, 2001

**TO:** J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director  
**FROM:** Paul F. Gubanc, Oak Ridge Site Representative  
**SUBJ:** Activity Report for Week Ending July 6, 2001

Wednesday and Thursday were Oak Ridge contractor holidays. Friday operations were reduced.

A. Y-12 Disassembly: This week, YAO issued three letters (all dated July 3) to BWXT each related to the unsuccessful effort to verify readiness for the new disassembly campaign:

1. YAO provided criteria (i.e., modifications and testing) to provide an adequate technical basis to return disassembly walk-in hood "AG" to operation. Basis development and restart of the newer disassembly hood "AL" and the Quality Evaluation hood are still pending.
2. YAO clearly specified that new BWXT and NNSA readiness assessments (RA) will be required for the disassembly campaign. YAO also highlighted "line management's failure to understand and take ownership of the readiness preparation..."
3. Last week, a YAO representative identified a special materials worker who was not aware of the material type and procedural requirements to control the hazards associated with the machining activity he was performing. Citing this and other recent events, YAO cited concerns with breakdowns in ISM and requested a BWXT response next week. (2-A)

B. Y-12 Enriched Uranium Operations (EUO) - Reduction: On Monday, I observed the first reduction firing evolution since the concern was identified with the reduction vessel bottom temperature potentially exceeding the AMSE maximum allowable (850°F). BWXT amended the analysis to reflect a higher temperature but the vessel sidewall still remains limiting. The mass charge was larger than the two prior runs but curiously took up less volume in the crucible and resulted in a lower peak pressure (about 43 psia versus 59 from the first run). Operations were performed smoothly. Button knockout and post-firing inspection should occur next week. (2-A)

C. Y-12 Building 9206: On Tuesday, I visited 9206 to review their preparations for pyrophoric material stabilization. The project manager advised that the effort had been delayed by two months based on lessons-learned from the Disassembly RA. In particular, he acknowledged that their old plan was to prepare *for the RA*; he now indicates they are preparing *for operations* which comprises a more complete set of activities, equipment and personnel. Given the difficulties at Y-12 with understanding and achieving readiness (see A. above), I attribute 9206's epiphany to EUO management which owns 9206 and learned much from Reduction. (3-B)

D. Y-12 Non-Fissile Material Storage: On Tuesday, I toured storage buildings 9720-14, 81-22 and 9720-38. The wooden loft and its contents has been removed from 9720-14. Some of the material removed from 81-22 (still about 3/4 full) has been relocated to 9720-38. 9720-38 has significant additional space available but this is being "reserved" for receipts of new depleted uranium. I've asked YAO why it makes sense to be purchasing additional material when we can't seem to find adequate storage for the depleted uranium we already have. (1-C)

cc: Board Members