

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 2, 2001

TO: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: T. Dwyer
SUBJ: Oak Ridge Activity Report for Week Ending November 2, 2001

Staff member T. Dwyer and outside expert R. West visited the Y-12 National Security Complex to observe the BWXT readiness assessment of a weapons dismantlement process. Oak Ridge site representative P. Gubanc was participating in an off-site training course.

A. Y-12 Dismantlement Preparations: In a meeting on Thursday of last week, BWXT informed YAO that a declaration of readiness for the dismantlement process would be issued in time to start the contractor readiness assessment (CRA) on Monday of this week. At the time of the meeting there were four pre-start findings from the BWXT performance self-assessment that had not been closed. The meeting resulted in a letter from YAO identifying four more pre-start issues. Despite assertions by BWXT that all of these pre-start items would be closed by the beginning of this week, the declaration of readiness was not issued until late Thursday evening. The Board's staff reviewed those closure packages that were complete by the middle of the week, noting that about half of them were incomplete and/or inconsistent.

In addition to these issues, a question was noted by the process operators during dry runs last Friday. It was found that the position of the tool bit holder on the lathe used for the dismantlement process could be varied so as to potentially affect a safety control and/or cause interference with a lathe part. Although identified last week, no action was taken until the YAO facility representative raised the issue to BWXT management attention.

Overall, BWXT still has significant problems with achieving and verifying readiness for starting/restarting activities. BWXT issued a standing order concerning activity readiness in response to a Board letter [June 28, 2001] that requested action to address the previous inability to achieve readiness for this dismantlement process. The activity readiness checklist promulgated by the standing order does not provide a useable management tool that would aid in startup preparations. An alternate activity readiness checklist was used by BWXT management to ensure the dismantlement process was ready for startup. All checklist items were signed off as complete by Friday, October 26th (in fact, most were signed that date, the day after the meeting with YAO), yet the process was clearly not ready for startup prior to Thursday, November 1st. The CRA began today with a focus on administrative reviews. Demonstrations will commence Monday.^(2.A)

B. Y-12 Procedure Changes/USQs: Correction of the tool bit holder issue identified above required a procedure change. Execution of the procedure modification process by the site revealed several potential issues associated with change control on safety basis documents. The tool bit holder procedure change was initially [erroneously] characterized as not safety related, and no USQ screen was conducted. This error was not identified by anyone in the modification processing chain. Other changes to this procedure have also been identified for which no USQ screen was completed. It appears that the application of the USQ process to procedure changes is misunderstood across a broad range of site personnel, including several from YAO, and that no checks or balances exist within the process to mitigate this misunderstanding.^(2-A)

cc: Board Members