

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 30, 1998

TO: G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: Paul F. Gubanc, Oak Ridge Site Representative

SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending October 30, 1998

I was at DNFSB-Headquarters on Thursday to attend a DOE/LMES Y-12 briefing to the Board.

A. Y-12 Enriched Uranium (EU) Phase-A2: Preparations to operate the EU Phase-A2 processes continued this week as follows:

1. The number of EU "Pre-A2" open issues in the LMES commitment tracking system ("ESAMS") has now grown from 45 to 53. EU management is pushing to close these prior to starting a DOE ORR on November 9 and has now recognized this as its controlling path.
2. The Holden Gas furnace completed testing and had its OSR surveillance conducted. Operation of the furnace (and the first actual use of the operating procedure) was attempted Friday afternoon but was delayed by minor procedure problems. Both of these evolutions were observed by the LMES ORR team.
3. The LMES ORR team has preliminarily identified seven pre-start and one post-start finding. Pending completion of the Holden Gas furnace evolutions, the LMES ORR team expects to issue its final report early next week.
4. I walked down the isolation of the hydrogen gas line to Building 9212 (an A2 safety control) on Friday and observed the same condition considered to be deficient by the staff in its trip report forwarded by the Board on October 8. In particular, the isolation valves are locked shut using the Y-12 "administrative control" tagout system which "does not automatically preclude operation of the equipment or system to which it is attached." (Procedure OP-151).

B. Y-12 Building 9212, E-Wing: Since the October 22 meeting between LMES RadCon and EU management and those workers affected by the respiratory protection controls in Building 9212, E-Wing, the following actions have occurred:

1. Respiratory protection requirements have been lifted to enter office spaces in E-Wing. Access to the process areas still requires respirators.
2. Ventilation has been increased to the maximum permitted levels.
3. Efforts to make available other, more comfortable, respiratory protection equipment (e.g., powered air-purifying respirators) have been accelerated.
4. Bioassay (fecal) results for one E-Wing worker have exceeded the LMES administrative control level of 1000 mrem/year (i.e., 1124 mrem CEDE). He and three other workers who are approaching this limit have had their administrative control level increased to 1500 mrem.

Staff members Andrews and Zavadoski will visit Y-12 next week to review this issue.

C. "Whitestone Initiative": Whitestone is an Oak Ridge initiative to "identify and eliminate requirements which do not promote cost-effective operations." This week, I completed my review of the 400+ suggestions and contractor plans to address them. The majority of the suggestions which addressed health and safety practices were applicable to Y-12/LMES with ETP/Bechtel-Jacobs also having a significant number. I expect to review the contractors' progress again early next year.

cc: Board members