

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 27, 1998

TO: G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: Paul F. Gubanc, Oak Ridge Site Representative

SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending November 27, 1998

Thursday and Friday were contractor holidays at Oak Ridge.

A. Y-12 Enriched Uranium Operations (EUO) Phase-A2: On November 24, LMES issued a response to the Board's October 8 letter regarding EUO's Phase A-2 restart. I have the following comments:

1. **Holden Furnace:** To their credit, LMES is continuing to review NFPA code compliance for all the furnaces in EUO. However, the root cause analysis prepared by LMES cites weaknesses only in the broad categories of "management systems" and "Standards, Policies, and Administrative Controls." I have challenged LMES management to explain to me what possible value this root cause is to them. Until specific problems are identified, meaningful corrective actions cannot be developed.
2. **Lockout/Tagout:** LMES intends to broaden the application of their current "Danger" tag and replace "Administrative Control" tags with "Caution" tags. Revised procedures for both are to be issued by December 15 though implementation is expected to take several months. My review of the draft procedures found them to be generally sound although there were numerous discrepancies and a couple fundamental logic faults (e.g., using caution tags with "Do Not Operate" written on them as opposed to using "Danger - Do Not Operate" tags). I've passed my comments along to DOE for their consideration and use.

B. Y-12 Building 9212 E-Wing: During a November 24 planning meeting, the following updates were obtained regarding elevated airborne uranium levels in Building 9212, E-Wing:

3. There are eleven dampers in the casting line ventilation ducting to Stack 110. Of the seven dampers inspected so far, none are working properly and all will require repair.
4. The ventilation engineer has calculated that if all the ventilation enclosure doors were removed and the system was operating as designed, hood face velocities should be about 120 feet/sec (desired range is between 100-200 fps). This suggests that there may be significant flow restriction and balance problems within the ducting.
5. For several weeks, preparing the "Code 80 Glovebox" for consolidating dry vacuum trap material has been on the work list. (This work was previously performed in E-Wing.) At this meeting, an operations supervisor identified that this glovebox as too small for the purpose.
6. Powered Air Purifying Respirators (PAPR) should become available for E-Wing operators next week. The PAPR hoods are more comfortable than the full-face masks now being worn.

While the assigned manager continues to pursue this problem energetically, a systematic engineering approach still appears lacking. A staff review is planned for December 8-10.

C. Visit by Secretary of Energy: On Monday, November 30, Energy Secretary Bill Richardson is scheduled to visit Oak Ridge. Current indications are that he will visit all three Oak Ridge sites (ORNL, Y-12 and the East Tennessee Technology Park, formerly K-25) and be accompanied by U.S. Senators Thompson and Frist and U.S. Congressmen Duncan and Wamp (all from Tennessee).

cc: Board members