

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 7, 2003

**TO:** J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director  
**FROM:** Donald Owen, Oak Ridge Site Representative  
**SUBJ:** Activity Report for Week Ending November 7, 2003

Staff member Dermot Winters visited the Melton Valley Waste Processing Facility on Tuesday and Wednesday to observe the DOE-ORO line management assessment of startup preparations.

A. Y-12 Work Planning/Control. As reported last week, certain issues with work planning and control of maintenance or modification activities had been recently identified at Y-12. These issues dealt with use of “skill-of-the-craft” and “standing work packages (SWPs)” to control work. BWXT management had decided to put in place a compensatory measure requiring senior operations management review prior to authorization of skill-of-the-craft and SWP work (note that such work is generally performed by a central Y-12 maintenance organization). This week, an operational directive was issued calling for the facility operations manager to review the work planning and provide release decisions for these work activities in major nuclear facilities. Prior to this compensatory measure, such work activities were released at the shift manager level.

BWXT management noted that actions to improve work planning and control for maintenance/modification work are being determined. YSO management noted to the site rep. that a YSO review of work planning and control for maintenance/modification activities is planned to start during the week of November 10<sup>th</sup> and be completed by the end of November. YSO management indicated that this review will address the adequacy of Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) implementation including the screening done to determine whether JHAs are required for various activities (see site rep. reports of October 31<sup>st</sup>, August 1<sup>st</sup>, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, and June 20<sup>th</sup>).

Related to planning and control of maintenance/modification activities at Y-12 is the Board’s letter of June 12, 1998. The Board noted in this letter that maintenance and construction activities were taking place at Y-12 without adequate knowledge, control or oversight by operations management. The site rep. noted to YSO management that revisiting the Board’s letter and the Y-12 response may be appropriate in the planned YSO assessment. (1-C)

B. Melton Valley Waste Processing Facility (WPF). The WPF will be initially operated as a Hazard Category 3 facility to process supernate wastes for disposal as low level waste. Readiness for operations had been declared by the operating contractor, Foster Wheeler Environmental Corporation, and the contractor Operational Readiness Review (ORR) was recently completed. The DOE-ORO line management assessment is currently in progress and is expected to be completed during the week of November 10<sup>th</sup>. The DOE-EM ORR is currently projected to start by early December. The site rep. and staff toured the WPF and discussed line management assessment efforts with DOE-ORO personnel. Potential issues with dried waste bag-in/bag-out operations and equipment maintenance were noted by the DOE-ORO team. (3-A)

C. Y-12 Building 9212 Wet Chemistry Restart. Following a series of problems, initial operation of the Wiped Film Evaporator was successfully completed late last week. Initial operation of the Denitrator, which converts product solution from the Wiped Film Evaporator to uranium oxide (UO<sub>3</sub>), was attempted this week. After equipment startup and feeding of solution, product UO<sub>3</sub> was not transferring from the denitrator to the product receiver as expected. A blockage of the downcomer from the denitrator to the receiver is suspected. Planning for troubleshooting this problem is in progress. (2-A)