

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 24, 2006

TO: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: R. Todd Davis/Donald Owen, Oak Ridge Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Activity Report for Week Ending November 24, 2006

Board member Mr. Joseph Bader and staff member Roy Kasdorf were on-site Wednesday to discuss the Uranium Processing Facility and the protocols for interface and communication on this important project at Y-12.

A. Conduct of Operations/Criticality Safety. As reported on October 13th, BWXT was investigating packaging of several legacy Warehouse containers that did not meet applicable criticality safety requirements. These containers (or “birdcages”) had been opened and items inspected prior to a small fire occurring in one of the containers. BWXT’s investigation has determined that the criticality safety issues involved two groups of birdcages: (1) two birdcages where the items were removed and repackaged into other birdcages; the items from one birdcage had not been placed in a separate can as required, and the items from the second birdcage exceeded an enrichment level limit; and (2) three birdcages where the items were placed back into the same birdcages in violation of applicable mass limits. For the first group, BWXT determined that an applicable procedure step to comply with criticality safety requirements for container loading was not rigorously followed by the work crew. For the second group, the procedure allowed operators to package the items back into the original container with no check of compliance with criticality safety requirements.

BWXT’s investigation determined that project and work crew personnel did not expect to find more than one item in these legacy containers, but the response to this change in expected conditions did not include adequate evaluation of the full impact on the work (including criticality safety). In discussion with the site rep., BWXT management noted that the work crew supervisor was effectively not in charge of the operation (e.g., had other duties, not directly observing the operation). A subject matter expert who was present to advise on the inspection of items effectively assumed the role of supervisor relative to packaging the items. Corrective actions are in development.

B. Building 9212 Documented Safety Analysis. In July, YSO completed their Safety Evaluation Report for the Building 9212 Documented Safety Analysis (DSA). BWXT noted that implementation would take approximately 6 months and committed to January 31, 2007. Last week, BWXT informed YSO that a two month suspension of operations would now be required in order to achieve the DSA implementation schedule. Instead of impacting facility operations, BWXT recommends that the implementation schedule be postponed to July 2007. YSO is currently evaluating this proposal.

C. Quality Evaluation Relocation. As noted last week, BWXT began their Readiness Assessment (RA) for startup of the linear glovebox in the Assembly/Disassembly Building. The RA team completed their review and provided a summary brief to YSO and BWXT management on Wednesday. The team recommends that startup be approved following appropriate resolution of the pre-start findings. BWXT plans to perform the initial quality evaluation operation in early December.