

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 12, 2004

TO: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: Donald Owen, Oak Ridge Site Representative
SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending March 12, 2004

A. Y-12 Video Conference with the Board. On Tuesday, Y-12 held a video-conference with the Board on the Y-12 Conduct of Operations improvement initiative and Y-12 efforts to improve activity-level work planning. Some noteworthy points discussed included:

- BWXT is instituting a "Conduct of Operations Representatives" program in nuclear facilities. These individuals will report to Quality Assurance division management (i.e., independent from Manufacturing Division management) and are intended provide independent oversight to nuclear operations as well as provide mentoring of operations personnel. Selection of personnel for the nine designated positions is in progress and their deployment to nuclear facilities is expected by June.
- While some general improvement in operational formality and discipline at Y-12 had been noted by site management earlier this year, several events in February (e.g., see item B.) have indicated the need of continuing reinforcement and improvement efforts.
- Regarding activity-level work planning (see site rep. report of January 30th), revised site requirements and guidance have been developed to correct improper screening of activities requiring Job Hazard Analyses (JHAs) and to document specific controls in JHAs instead of vague controls (e.g., "initiate a radiological work permit" or "contact fire protection engineering").
- A review of work planning protocols in addressing infrequent and potentially hazardous evolutions is in progress (see site rep. report of January 30th). To date, this review has identified a need for criteria or "triggers" that would call for higher-level management review and/or work start approval of such evolutions. The site rep. noted that a revisiting of the corrective actions stemming from the Sodium-Potassium fire/worker injury event in 1999 may be warranted as part of this review to ensure that those actions have not been lost or degraded. BWXT management subsequently informed the site rep. that they will perform such an evaluation. Results of these efforts are to be briefed to site management in early April. (I)

B. Y-12 Conduct of Operations/Feedback and Improvement. As initially reported on February 13th, during a Quality Evaluation disassembly operation, a work crew had rigged hand tools into a leveraging device to help establish vacuum in a lifting fixture; use of the rigged device resulted in a worker injury. On Wednesday, BWXT management briefed results of their investigation of the event to YSO. The rigged device had been used two days prior (without injury) by a different worker and supervisor on a different lifting fixture. BWXT management indicated that the supervisor had reported the prior use of the leveraging device that same day to Building 9204-4 shift management who directed that the lifting fixture be tagged out of service and to not use that practice in the future. BWXT management indicated that shift management did not call for a critique (a primary, formal mechanism for effecting feedback and improvement at Y-12) following that initial use and report from the first supervisor. Corrective actions discussed by BWXT management did not address this factor. In response to site rep. and YSO management questions, BWXT indicated that this factor will be reviewed and any necessary corrective actions identified. An investigation report is being completed by Building 9204-4 management. (I)

C. Conduct of Engineering. As reported last week, YSO had requested that a modified billet basket design be implemented that precludes processing of more than one billet at a time for certain metallurgical operations in Building 9215 (to avoid reliance on administrative controls). A DOE-YSO Facility Representative inspected a modified billet basket (not yet put into use) and determined that the geometry did not preclude multiple billets from being processed. The rigor and formality in the engineering of the modified design is being investigated by BWXT management. (I)