

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 25, 2004

TO: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: Don Nichols, Acting Oak Ridge Site Representative
SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending June 25, 2004

The site representative, Don Owen, was on vacation this week, and will be on vacation next week as well. Staff member Don Nichols is acting as site representative.

A. Maintenance Job Planning and Execution. Last week, BWXT Y-12 released the report from an independent assessment of the Y-12 Maintenance Job Planning and Execution program. The assessment team concluded that the Y-12 program adequately supported maintenance, and noted some significant improvements. However, of the 41 maintenance job packages reviewed, seven did not address all the job hazards and associated controls, and four of the twenty observed maintenance tasks could not be performed because of deficiencies in both maintenance job package work instructions and material staging. The manufacturing division manager told the acting site representative that he considers this level of performance unacceptable and is working to correct the deficiencies and underlying contributing factors.

Related problems were evident this week when a utilities maintenance crew began to purge a steam line connecting buildings 9212 and 9995. When steam was applied to the line, the noise caused by steam exiting the blow down valve near the entrance to building 9212 was described as "extremely painful to the ears fifty feet away." It took about twenty minutes for utilities personnel to turn off the purge valve. During that time, it seems unlikely that personnel entering the area could have heard criticality alarms had they been activated. Work planning did not include provisions for restricting access to the area or for posting alarm audibility notices. In addition, the lock-out/tag-out for the steam line included erroneous instructions for removing the lock-out restrictions; but rather than have the instructions corrected, utilities personnel performed actions to remove the lock-out the way they thought the instructions should have been written. An investigation into this event is ongoing.

B. Breached Cans in Warehouse. In the past two weeks, three metal food-type cans containing metal being retrieved from storage in the warehouse for processing in building 9212 were found to be breached. The breaches have been identified as constituting criticality safety deficiencies, but are not considered significant criticality safety concerns. Discussions with personnel who examined the cans indicate that the breaches may have been caused by mechanical insults during handling at some point in the past, rather than by degradation of the cans or their contents. One breach involved damage to the metal crimp around the end-seal, one breach was an inward-directed puncture in a sidewall, and one involved a small circumferential cut in the sidewall of the can.

C. Activity Level Work Planning. On May 21, 2004, the Board issued a letter regarding activity level work planning at National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) sites. Work planning was assessed at Y-12, in part, by an independent assessment of maintenance job planning and execution (discussed above). The assessment report is currently being evaluated by BWXT management. BWXT will conduct a corporate Integrated Safety Management review from August 9-20, 2004, which will also address work planning and job hazard analysis. It seems likely that the BWXT response to the Board's letter will not be issued until after the results of the August review have been digested and incorporated into the response.

D. Oxide Conversion Facility Readiness Review. The contractor review has slipped because of scope changes. It is now scheduled for September 20, 2004; the NNSA review is scheduled for November 2004.