

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

September 7, 2001

TO: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: Paul F. Gubanc, Oak Ridge Site Representative
SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending September 7, 2001

The office was closed Monday for the Labor Day holiday. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Region 2 Administrator Luis Reyes visited Oak Ridge Thursday and Friday to collect insights relative to his special assignment for the DOE Under Secretary regarding safety management.

A. ORNL Building 3019: This week, there were the following developments regarding closure of U-233 Inspection program ORR findings and preparations to commence inspections:

1. ORNL has designed and is fabricating go/no-go gauges for use in verifying the internal clearances of the tube vaults. The test procedure is drafted. As there are currently twelve unoccupied tube vaults, the staff has advocated testing these tubes first to provide higher confidence that the clearances will be adequate for the canister overpacks.
2. On Thursday, DOE-ORO Facility Safety (FS) personnel met with DOE line management and ORNL to discuss the status of resolving the five facility safety ORR pre-start findings.
 1. The FS reviewers require no further information to resolve the findings regarding the unaddressed hazards presented by the radiography source or the 3019A bridge crane. Until the crane issue is resolved, the inspection chamber cannot be moved at 3019A.
 2. The hydrogen deflagration accident scenario and plans to make the grounding strap "safety class" were extensively discussed. The DOE line manager, clearly frustrated, displayed a "just tell me the answer" attitude; FS admonished the line manager that he and ORNL must select a solution and demonstrate its adequacy.
 3. ORNL's "white papers" are not adequate to disposition the two control selection findings. ORNL was asked to provide, in a tabular form, the individual factors and justifications used for the existing controls. Disappointingly, ORNL is still wedded to a safety control selection rationale which dismisses long-term worker health effects.
3. DOE-ORO has yet to identify their independent reviewer for closure of the ORR facility safety findings. (3-A)

B. Y-12 Depleted Uranium (DU) Vault: Buildings 9809 and 9825-1 comprise a Category 2 nuclear facility which stores DU. This facility is located at Y-12 but is operated by the DOE-EM contractor, Bechtel Jacobs (BJC). In a staff report forwarded by a Board letter dated May 29, concerns were previously identified with the level of understanding of the authorization basis (AB) for this facility. Three months later the situation has not improved. My review of the current AB reveals that it is no longer reflective of the operations conducted or the existing hazards. A BJC justification for continued operation issued in 1998, intended to address the most obvious discrepancies, remains un-acted upon by DOE-ORO. This most recent example of DOE-ORO's failure to properly maintain a facility's AB, suggests that an intensive review of DOE-ORO's AB processes be performed. Other past examples include the 3019A SAR (see above) and 3019B perchlorate and criticality safety unreviewed safety questions. (1-C)

cc: Board Members