

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 31, 1998

TO: G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: P.F. Gubanc, Oak Ridge Site Representative

SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending July 31, 1998

A. Y-12 Control of Maintenance: Last week's report discussed a lock & tag violation at Building 9212. Followup meetings with DOE and LMES on July 31 to discuss corrective actions did not assuage concerns with work control although it did provide insights into more broad-based issues (e.g., pace and depth of corrective actions, vagaries in the lock & tag procedure and practices, etc.).

B. DOE-ORO Authorization Agreement (AA) Workshop: On July 28, I attended (and provided an impromptu briefing to) an ORO workshop on AA's. Observations include:

1. The use and understanding of AA's varies widely within ORO. Y-12 has progressed the farthest (five completed AA's) while the balance of ORO is still just getting started.
2. BNFL and Bechtel-Jacobs both expressed a strong desire to understand AA's more completely. BNFL is bound by their contract to establish AA's with DOE.
3. Most of the discussion focused on questions and concerns associated with AA's. While many of these were not closed, it did reflect some considered thought by the participants. Five working groups were established to draft ORO policies regarding AA's (e.g., change control and consequences of non-compliance) over the next 30 days.
4. ORO anticipates conducting additional AA pilots at its other sites before committing to full implementation of AA's across ORO.

C. ORNL Building 3019: Building 3019 is purchasing and installing equipment to inspect and repackage U-233 packages in accordance with Recommendation 97-1. This equipment includes a second transfer cask, a new hotcell in the building's Cell 2, and both neutron counting and radiography inspection equipment in Cell 3. Current plans are to complete installation by Spring 1999. On July 30, I walked down the U-233 inspection "flowpath" in Building 3019 with the cognizant DOE Facility Representative (FR) and LMER organization manager. My overall impression is that the designs and handling methods do not strongly consider the possibility of finding or handling seriously degraded or mispackaged containers. Additionally, the hotcell design will make it difficult to assure that the inner container for repackaged material is free of contamination before placing it into an outer container thus making sealing of the inner can difficult to verify. LMER acknowledges these concerns and asserts that they are, or will be, working them.

D. Meetings with Labor Leadership: The Atomic Trades and Labor Council (ATLC) represents hourly workers at the Y-12 Plant and ORNL. This week I met with the ATLC President, Carl Scarbrough, the Y-12 Vice President, W. Earl Johnson, and the Y-12 Safety Representatives. These meetings provided a useful vehicle to establish a working dialogue and to state our respective roles and goals to each other.

cc: Board members