

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

September 18, 1998

TO: G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director

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

SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending September 18, 1998

Mr. Gubanc started extended personal leave on September 17. Staff members Owen and Andrews, and outside expert Ralph West, were at Y-12 to review Enriched Uranium Operations (EUO) Phase-A2 restart preparations. Staff members Hunt and Zavadoski were at Y-12 to provide Site Representative coverage and review Building 9206.

A. Y-12 Elevated Uranium Bioassay Results: During routine urinalysis, an EUO worker in the casting area exhibited elevated uranium levels. A followup fecal sample confirmed these elevated levels (although not to a level exceeding DOE dose limits and requiring reporting). Six additional coworkers were evaluated; two had elevated uranium levels (though lower than the first worker). The workers with elevated counts were removed from work in this area, respiratory protection was required for casting area workers, and a wipe down of the casting area was conducted. A status briefing is planned for next week which the Site Representative will attend.

B. Y-12 Barrier Ropes: Multi-colored "carnival flagging" is used extensively throughout Y-12 to post industrial hazards, construction areas, special exhibits, criticality alarm non-coverage exclusion areas, and other high attention areas. There is no formal control over this flagging and rarely are such areas accompanied by a posted explanation. In response to prior events where postings were misunderstood and/or not obeyed, Y-12 has issued a new posting procedure (effective October 1) which prescribes the use of particular barrier types, postings and formal authorization. This should improve the level of hazard communication across Y-12.

C. Y-12 Lockout/Tagout: Several LO/TO deficiencies have been noted at Y-12 in the past few weeks. A task group comprised of representatives of line management, ES&H, the union, and CONOPS has been formed to resolve this recurrent problem. Their primary order of business is to revise the work procedure as soon as possible so line management can adequately implement the requirements.

cc: Board members