

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

TO: Steven Stokes, Acting Technical Director
FROM: William Linzau and Rory Rauch, Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Oak Ridge Activity Report for Week Ending September 13, 2013

Building 9212: Last week, the B&W General Manager issued a letter to the NPO Manager indicating that changes in the Uranium Processing Facility (UPF) schedule have led to the need to revise B&W's plan for transitioning enriched uranium operations from Building 9212 to UPF (see 7/22/11 and 3/23/13 reports). B&W's previous plan balanced nuclear safety and programmatic risks by following NNSA headquarters guidance to start closure of Building 9212 in 2019 and then phase the closure of other processes during the following three years. The B&W General Manager's letter transmitted a charter establishing a team to evaluate various transition options to align with the startup of UPF. The current startup date for UPF is the end of the calendar year 2025. Previous versions of the transition plan estimated startup of UPF in early 2024. The team is scheduled to provide an updated transition plan to NPO by October 30, 2013.

Building 9204-2E: Late last week, an NPO facility representative identified a work control issue while B&W was trying to address an equipment problem in Building 9204-2E. The oxygen monitor for a zone in one of the facility's gloveboxes was giving anomalous readings and operators appropriately entered the abnormal operating procedure for this condition. The Building 9204-2E Operations Manager convened an operational safety board (OSB) to evaluate a proposal to remove certain materials from the zone as part of the response to the oxygen monitor failure. The OSB determined that certain items could be removed, but a sealed plastic bag of pyrophoric material needed to remain in the glovebox until repairs of the oxygen monitor were completed. This decision was not clearly communicated to the responsible supervisor, who gave the workers verbal instruction to remove all the material from the glovebox. The NPO facility representative who had attended the OSB was watching the evolution and questioned the removal of the bag of pyrophoric material. The Production Manager paused work, confirmed the decision of the OSB, and directed that the bag remain in the glovebox. Production management recognizes the weakness in the mechanism used to communicate the OSB decision and they are evaluating appropriate corrective actions.

Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management (OREM): The site representative observed the final oral board to qualify a DOE facility representative for the Molten Salt Reactor Experiment facilities. The oral board was conducted well and thoroughly tested the applicant's qualifications. The applicant was well prepared and demonstrated adequate knowledge on the facility's processes and safety requirements. The board determined the applicant was qualified with only a couple of follow-on items to review.

Transuranic Waste Processing Center (TWPC): In April 2013, a subcontractor to Wastren Advantage, Inc. (WAI) started initial soil grading of the construction site for a prototypical test facility for the Sludge Processing Facility Buildouts Project called the Sludge Test Area. During excavation of a test pit, the subcontractor found a few anomalous materials such as Tyvek clothing, trash, stainless steel, and concrete. No radiological contamination was found on these items, but eight wooden timbers and one piece of pipe were unearthed that had fixed low level contamination. These items were appropriately controlled by facility personnel and additional excavation and sampling were conducted. No further radiological contamination was detected on debris or soil. The subcontractor is preparing to refill the excavations and level the area for the future construction of the test facility (see 9/6/13 report).