

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

August 5, 2005

TO: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: R. Todd Davis/Donald Owen, Oak Ridge Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Activity Report for Week Ending August 5, 2005

Staff member Jay DeLoach and outside expert Joseph King were at Y-12 to observe a workshop hosted by Y-12 on operational readiness issues.

A. Oxide Conversion Facility. To address the false low-level indication for the scrubber bottoms tank (see last week's report), BWXT increased the instrument delay in responding to a low-level signal. The Basis for Interim Operation requires that the safety shutdown system respond to an actual low-level condition within 22 seconds. Based on testing this week, BWXT confirmed that the system will respond within this limit. These instruments were returned to service on Thursday. However, additional Hydrogen Fluoride (HF) system testing is on hold while a walk-down of safety-significant systems/equipment is performed to resolve a prior configuration management issue (see site rep. 7/15/05 report). To support the walk-down, the power to two equipment cabinets was isolated on Thursday evening. Shortly thereafter, operators noted that power to an equipment cabinet that supports several HF detectors had been isolated. These HF detectors are required to be operational based on the current facility status. Power to the detectors was subsequently restored and BWXT's investigation continues.

B. Melton Valley Transuranic Waste Processing. As reported last week, Foster-Wheeler started their Operational Readiness Review (ORR) for processing contact-handled transuranic waste. On Monday, Foster-Wheeler management withdrew their readiness certification and suspended the review following ORR team inquiry on several issues. The main issues involve: (1) yet-to-be completed installation of main glovebox heat detectors and of waste staging building insulation noted in the authorization basis (these items had been identified as open prior to the start of the ORR); (2) potential implementation problems with the Unreviewed Safety Question process at Melton Valley; and (3) yet-to-be completed interface protocols for handling waste received at Melton Valley (i.e., from Bechtel-Jacobs at Oak Ridge) that is not compliant with acceptance criteria assumed in safety analyses (e.g., containing liquids). The ORR team also noted a number of issues with an emergency response drill conducted for the ORR. Efforts to resolve these issues are projected to take several weeks.

C. Readiness Workshop. The site rep. and staff attended the Readiness Workshop hosted by YSO and BWXT. This is the fourth complex-wide workshop on operational readiness since 2002 and is intended to be a forum for sharing lessons-learned and identifying focus areas to improve line management readiness preparations and conduct of readiness reviews. Noteworthy was increased Headquarters engagement planned by NNSA Office of the Chief of Defense Nuclear Safety personnel on site readiness programs and major startup/restart efforts.

D. Secretary of Energy Visit. On Monday, the Secretary of Energy visited the Oak Ridge Reservation and toured facilities at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL), the East Tennessee Technology Park, and Y-12. Secretary Bodman discussed and answered questions on current DOE issues with large groups of ORNL and Y-12 personnel.