

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 15, 1999

TO: G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director
FROM: Paul F. Gubanc, Oak Ridge Site Representative
SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending April 16, 1999

I am on annual leave Friday thus this report is being issued on Thursday.

A. Y-12 Enriched Uranium Reorganization: This week, LMES commenced a reorganization to place enriched uranium (EU) forming and machining operations in Building 9215, M & O Wing under the manager for Depleted Uranium Operations (DUO). Key considerations involving this change include:

1. DUO processes (casting, forming and machining) are identical to those used in M & O Wing though on a different scale (i.e., size). DUO is viewed as productive and well managed and improvements are hoped to be carried over from DUO to M & O Wing operations.
2. DUO already has major operations in Building 9215. Transferring M & O Wing to DUO will place the 9215 facility entirely under one line manager.
3. DUO was not as directly impacted as EUO by the 1994 standdown due to the lack of criticality issues, it resumed operations without undergoing a rigorous DOE readiness evaluation, and DUO does not currently operate under some of the programs required of EUO (e.g., criticality safety, fissile material handler certification).

I am following up with DOE and LMES to verify how they intend to assure critical safety programs for M & O Wing continue to receive the support they deserve under DUO. (I-B.)

B. Y-12 Safety Documentation: As mentioned last week, consistency between Y-12 facility safety analyses and their fire hazard analyses (FHA) has been problematic. An LMES Process Improvement Team has been working this issue since November 1998 and on April 12 presented to DOE that: 1) LMES was implementing procedural changes to clarify that FHA's are authorization basis (AB) related documents subject to formal configuration control, and 2) the recent string of positive unreviewed safety questions on Y-12 nuclear facilities regarding the FHA's should be at an end. I stressed to LMES that the corrective actions did not adequately address the role of line management in maintaining the fidelity of their facility AB to the supporting documents (e.g., FHA). (II-B)

C. Y-12 Disassembly Operation: On April 13 & 14, I observed the extraction of a secondary from a re-entry vehicle. This was only the third unit of this type and is still undergoing process development. I identified a safety issue regarding the use of protective equipment and numerous opportunities for process and worker safety enhancement. Of particular concern, was the loss of a cutting bit during the operations (second occurrence) which could then have been dragged along the secondary by the cutting tool. I have discussed these concerns with both DOE and LMES. (II-B.2)

D. Y-12 Site Integrated Modernization (YSIM): In support of YSIM, DOE is preparing a Y-12 Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) to evaluate modernization alternatives. On April 13, I attended a public meeting on the proposed scope of the SWEIS. Comments strongly supporting the Y-12 mission and its modernization were supplied by U.S. Senator Thompson, U.S. Congressmen Duncan and Wamp, numerous state and local elected officials, local representatives of organized labor and local business organizations. With the exception of several peace activists, the overwhelming opinion expressed was that Y-12 modernization is both necessary and overdue. (I-A.3)

cc: Board Members