

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 15, 1999

**TO:** G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director  
**FROM:** Paul F. Gubanc and David T. Moyle, Oak Ridge Site Representatives  
**SUBJ:** Activity Report for Week Ending October 15, 1999

Mr. Gubanc was on annual leave Friday. Staff member Linzau was on-site Wednesday and Thursday for site familiarization and follow up on HF system welding issues.

Next week, Oak Ridge will host three different visitors - Mr. Whiteman from the Albuquerque office, Gen. Habiger, and Mr. DeGrasse (DP-3).

A. U-233 Inspection Program - This week, additional issues relating to the ORNL Building 3019 preparations for the U-233 inspection program arose:

1. On October 12, DOE issued a letter to LMER requiring a project pause of approximately 30 days to evaluate the status of the U-233 inspection program and to determine if the optimal approach to achieving program objectives is being taken. Following this pause, a peer review group will evaluate plans before the project proceeds.
2. On October 14, another dummy container was dropped during testing. During this test, ORNL personnel were using a lifting fixture not covered by their test plan, with dual lifting capabilities, both magnetic and vacuum. The container was being lifted with the vacuum engaged, and the electromagnet disengaged. While more than adequate suction was present to lift the 5 pound can out of the well, the can caught on an edge as it entered the inspection chamber, causing the vacuum to be broken and the can to fall approximately 30 feet to the bottom of the well. While the can suffered minimal damage, this operation was conducted outside the bounds of the test plan and without DOE's knowledge. DOE intends to make an issue of the contractor's lack of control of their test plan.

In contrast to the events of last week, DOE and management was quite timely in notifying us of this most recent can drop. (3-A)

B. Enriched Uranium Operations (EUO) Phase B Resumption: Stemming from the lack of progress in EUO resumption, DOE issued a letter on October 8 requiring LMES to submit a high confidence schedule by October 25. The letter details the following:

1. Hydrogen Fluoride (HF) Process readiness must be achieved by March 31, 2000 in accordance with the current schedule.
2. Readiness activities for all block 2 EUO wet chemistry processes needed to conduct a satisfactory inventory in all material balance areas must be complete by October 1, 2000.
3. The schedule must be fully resource loaded, demonstrate high confidence (80% or better), contain assumptions, and estimate funding required for success. (2-A)

C. EUO Reduction Process: EUO is still working to close out all prestart findings from the LMES readiness assessment (RA) and the DOE line management review. The DOE RA has now slipped to November 1. The reactor vessel issue is not yet resolved, but LMES intends to hydrostatically test the current vessels, radiograph the welds and conduct visual inspection to 5 times magnification. We are not certain what criteria the vessels are expected to meet, or the path forward if the current vessels are found to be inadequate. (2-A)

cc: Board Members