

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

September 4, 1998

TO: G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director

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

SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending September 4, 1998

A. Y-12 Control of Maintenance: On September 1 and 2, I met with LMES Operations and Engineering management to discuss the August 21 event wherein construction personnel relocated emergency notification speakers in Building 9215 without authorization. Key observations are:

1. Y-12 Nuclear Operations division (this does not include enriched uranium [EU] operations), placed a hold on all construction work pending joint walkdowns by operations, engineering and construction personnel. (Walkdowns are expected to wrap up the end of this week.)
2. Other Y-12 operating divisions have been provided the lessons-learned and asked to consider whether they should take comparable measures.
3. Senior management is promulgating the expectation that each construction job should have an operations person specifically assigned to monitor its conduct and progress.
4. The roles and responsibilities of operations and engineering for construction is not precise and can lead to operations and engineering both assuming the other is providing oversight. This problem is recognized by senior management but is not yet resolved.

B. Y-12 Pump Explosion Investigation: This week LMES issued its investigation report on the J-107 brine pump explosion of August 5. The report is well written and clearly identifies numerous conduct of operations (CONOPS) failures which led to the event. One interesting conclusion I reach after reading the report is that in Y-12's desire to improve CONOPS across the site, the Utilities organization was permitted to retreat further from CONOPS since they could or would not fully implement it (e.g., the pump operating procedures were canceled without replacement in 1995).

Extremes in the other direction also exist at Y-12. The Plant Shift Superintendent's office had previously used one-page "quick response guides" for initial emergency response. In the guise of improved CONOPS, these guides are now being replaced with multi-paged, yet properly formatted, emergency response procedures. It appears "formality" is being confused with "formatting".

C. Y-12 Building 9731: Subsequent to last week's staff review of Building 9731 (a developmental testing facility), LMES has taken aggressive action to catalog, properly contain and deinventory excess hazardous materials in the facility. Additionally, the cognizant manager is evaluating her other facilities for similar conditions and sharing the lessons-learned with her staff.

D. Y-12 Integrated Safety Management (ISM): This week LMES assigned an experienced manager (Lee Bryson), with deep prior involvement in the Y-12 ISM pilot, to spend full-time driving ISM implementation in the Y-12 Balance of Plant (BOP). She has assembled a small team to assist her in monitoring implementation and developing a corrective actions.

cc: Board members