

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 21, 2016

MEMO TO: Steven Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: Ramsey Arnold and Zachery Beauvais, Pantex Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Report for Week Ending December 23, 2016

Emergency Radiation Treatment Facility (ERTF): Pantex conducted a drill at the Northwest Texas Healthcare System (NWTHS) Hospital to test the effectiveness of the CNS ERTF support team's execution of procedures with the NWTHS emergency response organization. Recently, NWTHS replaced the Veterans Affairs Hospital as the ERTF, with the Baptist St. Anthony Hospital acting as a secondary ERTF. As a result, this was the first ERTF drill at NWTHS. The drill scenario began with the Pantex Fire Department (FD) transporting two injured patients that were confirmed to be radiologically contaminated to NWTHS. ERTF team members drilled their capabilities in the following areas: standing-up and declaring team operability, donning personnel protective equipment, surveying and decontaminating radiologically contaminated wounds, and controlling contamination at hot/cold boundaries. Additionally, the Pantex Emergency Management Department was able to assess if adequate supplies were available at the ERTF, better understand NWTHS practices for treating patients, and work through the different hand-off practices (e.g., FD delivering patients to NWTHS and the ERTF support team arriving on-scene). The site representative and personnel from NPO, Texas Department of Public Safety, and the City of Amarillo observed the drill.

Special Tooling Quality Assurance: NPO recently approved the latest CNS quality assurance program description (QAPD) with several conditions of approval. Notably, NPO expects CNS to apply NQA-1 standards, including commercial grade dedication, to special tooling where nuclear safety functions have been identified, consistent with Title 10, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 830, Subpart A. CNS is developing a path forward to correct this deficiency.

Extent of Condition (EoC) Reviews: CNS recently completed an independent assessment that evaluated the EoC review process at Pantex. The EoC enterprise-level process (i.e., for Y-12 and Pantex) was implemented at Pantex in April 2016. It is now used for determining and documenting the need, scope, priority, and boundaries for an EoC review, as well as for executing the process with suggested tools. The independent assessment identified several observations, including that the Pantex EoC review process is maturing but not yet meeting its ultimate intent. Concerns identified include instances where lack of management support and attention, or lack of understanding of the process, leads to the EoC reviews not being adequately prioritized (likely contributing to long cycle times and inadequate documentation of the EoC review); reluctance of individuals conducting the review to explore possibilities outside of their direct control (i.e., outside of their organization); and selection of team leads that are often the issue owner (creating a potential conflict of interest and introducing inherent biases into the review). The site representatives met with the EoC independent assessment lead and members of the Pantex Contractor Assurance Department, which owns and implements the EoC review process, to discuss the concerns identified and potential approaches to improve the EoC process. While the corrective actions, which are in the early stages of development, should be able to address much of the process improvement-related issues, some of the actions needed to improve EoC implementation are outside of the direct control of the contractor assurance group. Until senior management ownership and support of the EoC process occurs within each organization, it will be challenging for the EoC review process to adequately mature.