

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 16, 2017

MEMO TO: Steven Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: Ramsey Arnold and Zachery Beauvais
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Report for Week Ending March 17, 2017

DNFSB Staff Activity: C. Berg observed the ongoing W76 Nuclear Explosive Safety Study.

Pantex Drill and Exercise Committee (PDEC): The CNS Emergency Management Department (EMD) chartered PDEC in March 2016 in an effort to improve the planning, conduct, and evaluation of drills and exercises (see 4/1/2016 report), based on concerns raised in DNFSB Recommendation 2015-1, *Emergency Preparedness and Response at the Pantex Plant*. Along with participating in monthly meetings, PDEC members are expected to assist in the development of realistic drills and exercises as they pertain to their organization, select and/or develop drill and exercise objectives for their organization, assure their organization is appropriately trained to provide drill and exercise controllers and evaluators, and provide input to EMD regarding completed drills and exercises. The PDEC charter included 23 different organizations—11 of which originally had vacant or unappointed memberships. While many of these vacancies have been filled, the charter has not been updated, and several organizations have not backfilled PDEC memberships after personnel left the organization. The resident inspectors have attended PDEC meetings and reviewed PDEC attendance records, and note deficiencies in some organizations' participation including weapon operations, nuclear facility representatives, infrastructure and maintenance, nuclear and explosive surety, and safety and industrial hygiene. PDEC attendance is only one metric of the initiative's success, and also does not necessarily represent active PDEC participation and input. For organizations that do not regularly attend these meetings, they could potentially meet the intent of PDEC, at least partially, by providing appropriate input to EMD outside of the meetings; however, adequate input does not appear to be consistently provided. Additionally, since chartering PDEC, the highest number of different organizations to attend one meeting was nine, during March and June 2016. Since June 2016, the number of organizations attending monthly meetings has ranged between five to seven, and, of the 23 charter organizations, 10 have participated in only one or no monthly meetings. The resident inspectors have shared this feedback with CNS and NPO. While the Pantex drill and exercise programs have improved since EMD chartered PDEC, there is still room for PDEC to grow and continue to enhance the Pantex emergency response capability.

Potential Inadequacy of the Safety Analysis (PISA): Last week, CNS transmitted a letter to NPO to request extensions on the allowable processing time of multiple new information entries entered into their Unreviewed Safety Question (USQ) process. The current CNS USQ procedure requires PISA determinations to be made within three business days. Based on an emerging change in posture for evaluating new information, the number of new information entries increased, and in this instance, surpassed the workload ability of the Safety Analysis and Engineering Department. While the resident inspectors view the change in CNS posture for processing new information as potentially positive, staffing levels, including properly trained and qualified personnel, may not be adequate to meet the increased workload. Of the entries covered by the extension request, CNS performed preliminary screens and determined five entries may have the potential to be declared as PISAs. Since requesting the extension, CNS declared three PISAs on three separate issues. One new information entry was determined to not meet PISA criteria. The fifth entry remains open and CNS is aggressively pursuing the PISA determination.