

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

MEMO TO: Timothy J. Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: Timothy Hunt and Rory Rauch, Pantex Site Representatives
DATE: 27 June 2008
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Weekly Report

Nuclear Safety Performance Indicators: PXSO recently requested that B&W Pantex provide three periodic reports on the health of nuclear safety at Pantex. Monthly reports beginning in August will identify stand alone performance indicators such as technical safety requirement violations, missed inspections, safety basis inadequacies, and availability of safety systems. Beginning in September, reports will be provided to PXSO identifying deficiencies and near-misses associated with safety systems, nuclear safety management programs, conduct of operations, and procedure adequacy/adherence. Quarterly reports initiated in the first quarter of FY09 are expected to evaluate the overall effectiveness of each safety management program.

W87 Mechanical Safe Arming Device (MSAD) Operations: This week, for the first time since 2004, an MSAD was successfully exercised as part of the W87 disassembly and inspection process. B&W Pantex management and engineering, as well as representatives from the design agencies, witnessed the successful initial use of the new electrical tester.

On-Site Transportation and Staging Nuclear Explosive Safety (NES) Master Study: NNSA approved the NES study report (dated March 28, 2008) this week. The approval authority (NA-12) recategorized four of the five pre-start findings proposed by the NES study group. Two findings were downgraded to post-starts and two others to deliberation topics. No compensatory measures were enjoined to support continued operations until the lone pre-start is formally closed. NA-12 concurred with the designation of the eight post-start findings.

Limiting Conditions of Operation (LCO) Integration: Last week, the activation of a ventilation duct detector smoke alarm, which is not associated with an impairment of a credited fire suppression system, overrode the credited blast door interlock (BDI) system in a nuclear explosive facility. As a conservative measure, the LCO for an unplanned impairment of the deluge fire suppression system was entered. However, the required action specified in the LCO for the BDI system—to administratively ensure that at least one door is closed at all times—was not performed. B&W Pantex management plans to review the LCOs specified in the technical safety requirements and perform a crosswalk with safety system interlocks to establish a hierarchy of actions to take in the future when simultaneous system LCOs are required.

Production Technician (PT) Qualifications: The B&W Pantex Technical Training Department recently completed an assessment of the W76 training program. The review found that four of the eight PTs evaluated did not present evidence of meeting the minimum math and/or reading requirements demanded of their position. The Manufacturing Division training officer has been notified.

PXSO Organizational Changes: In order to devote the appropriate attention to key areas such as the line oversight and contractor assurance system (LOCAS), issues management within the site office, and the contractor and federal training programs, PXSO has reassigned the Assistant Manager of Oversight and Assessments (AMOA). The newly created senior manager position will have access to matrix support from within the site office and report to the Deputy Site Manager, when selected. An interim AMOA has been appointed until a decision is made on the future direction of the oversight and assessments group.

Zone 4 Storage: Three of the six [unmodified] Richmond magazines are now empty and will no longer be used for staging nuclear and explosive material because of their deteriorating structural condition. Radiation safety performed close-out surveys recently, the locks have been removed, and plans are to eventually raze the magazines.