

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

MEMO TO: Timothy J. Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: Timothy Hunt and Rory Rauch, Pantex Site Representatives
DATE: 4 July 2008
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Weekly Report

W76 Operational Suspension: As options for the restart of W76 operations are being considered, one of the concerns has been how the production technicians (PTs) could safely operate under two separate processes and sets of controls for the same activity. B&W Pantex now proposes to use the same processes and controls for both the 12kV and 5 kV environments. For example, a dielectric cover will only be credited as a control in the 12kV environment, but the cover will be installed in both environments to establish consistent PT actions. Both disassembly and assembly operations will be started in the 12 kV environment and assembly will transition to the 5kV environment later this year. Analysis indicates that most anodized tooling will bleed charge at voltages less than 5 kV so it is not expected that many tools will need the coating stripped to be compatible with this environment. About 20 operating procedures are being revised to support the process changes associated with this work suspension.

12-66 Startup Notification: In May, B&W Pantex proposed a contractor readiness assessment as the level of review for expanding nuclear material storage into the north end of the Hazard Category 2 Building 12-66 warehouse. This week, PXSO rejected the proposal and directed contractor and NNSA operational readiness reviews to begin later this month.

Weapon Receipt Inspection: Prior to off-loading shipments of weapons from transportation trailers, routine inspections of the shipping containers are performed to verify the Faraday cage is intact. It was discovered this week that all eight bolts on a shipping container were loose upon receipt from the military; thus potentially compromising the integrity of the Faraday cage. The item remained in the trailer until a procedure was written to tighten the bolts and reestablish the lightning protection control prior to removing and storing the item in a magazine.

Missed Preventive Maintenance (PM): The annual fire system maintenance activity for the 12-79 warehouse—a non-nuclear facility—exceeded the allowable periodicity of one year plus a 25 percent grace period. The PM was reportedly completed in March but the paperwork was lost; then in mid-June it recommenced but was not completed by 26 June due to management oversight. The facility was placed in the maintenance mode this week and the PM completed.

Requirements Flowdown into Procedures: PTs were performing operations using a Category 1 electrical tester when a procedure discrepancy was identified. Per DOE Or 452.2C, *Nuclear Explosive Safety*, colored decals are no longer required for identification of categorization. One plant procedure showed “N/A” in the column for the color of the decal required while a different procedure still required a colored decal on the tester. The custodian of the incorrect procedure will revise it to make it consistent with the order. There have been a few other cases recently in which a requirement change was not properly flowed into all applicable procedures.

Special Nuclear Material (SNM) Division: A new division has been created within the B&W Pantex management structure to more closely focus attention on SNM processing. The division responsibilities had previously been under a couple other organizations and its primary activities will be pit recertification, laser gas sampling, and pit repackaging. This realignment supports NNSA transformation initiatives regarding consolidation/storage/processing of SNM.