

## **DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD**

**MEMO TO:** J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director  
**FROM:** Timothy Hunt and Dave Kupferer, Pantex Site Representatives  
**DATE:** Friday, April 22, 2005  
**SUBJECT:** Pantex Plant Weekly Report

**DNFSB Staff Activity:** J. Shackleford attended specific administrative control training and observed tooling operations.

**Component Separation:** Last week, during disassembly operations, production technicians were unable to remove a small explosive component while utilizing the process detailed in the applicable Nuclear Explosive Operating Procedure (NEOP). Subsequently, while performing an approved Nuclear Explosive Engineering Procedure (NEEP), which provided an alternate method to remove the component, production technicians observed partial separation of the small explosive component. Process engineers have drafted an additional NEEP, which provides a process the production technicians will utilize to remove the portion of the component that has already begun to separate. The remainder of the component will stay affixed to the unit during resumption of the NEOP process. Before resuming operations, BWXT is awaiting design agency approval of the proposed path forward, weapons response input, and the possible convening of a Nuclear Explosive Safety Change Evaluation (NCE) study.

**Specific Administrative Controls (SACs):** PXSO personnel that review and oversee SACs developed and implemented by the contractor attended 2-day initial training this week on expectations outlined in DOE-STD-1186-2004, *Specific Administrative Controls*. A January 7, 2005 tasking letter from NNSA to the field directed that sites complete this training by April 30, 2005 to meet a commitment made to the Board in its Implementation Plan for Recommendation 2002-3. The course was comprehensive in covering the new standard but the lack of site-specific examples and discussion made it difficult to determine the state of the development and implementation of the 132 SACs at Pantex.

In its response to the training commitment, BWXT generated a crosswalk and is taking credit for previously conducted training to meet 30 of 34 enabling objectives from the NNSA-provided course. From a review of the crosswalk, it appears the target audience as identified by BWXT may not include all personnel that would benefit from the training. BWXT expects to accomplish the remaining four objectives of initial training by September. PXSO has requested that BWXT provide justification for the training delay.

**Disassembly Abnormality:** An NCE determined this week that proposed modifications to the W76 disassembly operation can be safely performed with a couple minor procedural changes and recalibration of a tool prior to use. Significant changes to the process include the use of aluminum spacer disks and an elaborate electrical bonding scheme. The Justification for Continued Operation identifies new hazards and controls associated with potential drops of the disassembly fixture or spacers disks and electrostatic discharge issues. PXSO will likely require BWXT to ensure the cause of the anomaly is understood and any procedure or tooling changes are made prior to resuming operations on other units of the same weapon program.

**Pit Repackaging:** In support of Recommendation 99-1, BWXT recently began recapping a relatively small number of W55 pit tubes on which temporary caps had previously been installed. The permanent caps have a higher integrity seal and will improve the long-term safe storage of these pits. The campaign should finish next week and the pits will then be processed into sealed insert containers.