

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

MEMO TO: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: Timothy Hunt and Dave Kupferer, Pantex Site Representatives
DATE: 11 November 2005
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Weekly Report

Technical Safety Requirements Integrated Implementation Plan (TSRIIP): Last week, PXSO sent a letter to BWXT that discussed several PXSO concerns regarding the implementation of the remaining controls from the TSRIIP. Examples of these concerns include no plan or schedule to implement 39 remaining controls, several specific administrative controls were transferred into safety management programs without appropriate tracking, and some controls were deferred as potential future improvements without a path forward. PXSO has requested that BWXT develop a new plan to implement the aforementioned controls. In addition, PXSO has requested that BWXT update the appropriate safety basis documents to reflect that the documents are effective, including the bases for operating despite that 39 of the controls are not yet implemented. PXSO expects BWXT to complete implementation of all TSR controls by May 2006.

Nuclear Explosive Operating Procedures (NEOP): BWXT production technicians recently discovered several errors in a NEOP. After initially finding a faulty branch on an optional step, the PTs stopped work and a subsequent thorough review of the procedure revealed a critical step and a few person-to-person steps were not identified, an incorrect drawing reference, and numerous typographical errors. This was the first time the procedure had been used in production and indicates an inadequate procedure review and validation.

Move Right System (MRS): During facility tours, representatives from the office of the Chief of Defense Nuclear Safety observed that there was 66 percent more special nuclear material located in a nuclear explosive bay than was identified on the material inventory placard for that facility. During the subsequent critique, BWXT determined that a hole exists in the MRS such that, during short periods of time, material moves could be authorized that would cause facility material limits to be exceeded. As a result, BWXT suspended all special nuclear material movements until a compensatory measure (i.e., standing order) was implemented that verifies the correct facility inventory. BWXT also plans to identify other potential weaknesses that may exist in the MRS software code, revise the MRS software code, and review the purpose and use of the material inventory placards. Facility material limits were not exceeded during this incident.

Seismic Project Plan: BWXT submitted a resource loaded seismic project plan to PXSO on 30 September that included a series of proposed Stage Gates, or decision points. This week, PXSO informed BWXT that it is withholding approval of the seismic project plan until BWXT performs the following actions: consolidates previously completed seismic evaluations, prepares Documented Safety Analyses that describe the state of known seismic resistance of nuclear facilities, and pursues additional soil and anchor bolt seismic analyses.

Paint Bay Startup: This week, PXSO approved startup of Paint Bay operations based on its determination that operational readiness review and Nuclear Explosive Safety Study (NESS) findings had been closed satisfactorily. It is expected that the first painting operations will be on joint test assemblies or non-nuclear equipment since there is still an outstanding safety issue associated with a specific weapon program. To close the NESS "special" finding, a master study of the Pantex tooling program is being planned for early next year.