

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 13, 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: W. White, Pantex Site Representative
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending June 13, 2003

DNFSB Activity Summary: W. White was on site all week.

Loss of Production Computer System: Last Friday, the Pantex Plant lost its production computer system when BWXT personnel inadvertently formatted the production system instead of a temporary storage area as intended. The loss of the production system resulted in the loss of the Move Right System, the safety-related software used to authorize material movements. Poor communications with manufacturing personnel resulted in attempts to use the Move Right System on Friday, before the production system was fully restored. BWXT restored the system on Saturday and verified questionable movement transactions involving certain items. [II.A]

Expired Shipping Container Certification: On Monday, BWXT identified a DT-23 shipping container with special nuclear material whose annual leak test inspection had expired the previous Saturday (June 7, 2003). This inspection is required for DOT certification of the individual container. The *Technical Safety Requirements for Pantex Facilities* (TSRs) contain a specific administrative control (5.6.13.4.5) that nuclear material in the facility in which the container was staged “must be in a certified DOT Type B approved container.” The lapse in certification for the container was a TSR violation.

The responsible manager had noted the container certification was to expire the week before. He assumed, however, that a two-day grace period was allowed on the expiration date since this had been previous practice and remained noted in an approved procedure (F7-5066) that defines safety requirements for the facility. He also intended to move the container to a facility that does not require staging in a DOT-certified container on the Friday before the container leak test expired. As a result of the computer problems discussed above, however, he was unable to initiate the move. He did not bring this to the attention of his department manager, however. BWXT could have moved the container on Friday without the Move Right System by allowing the Operations Center to control the move. The container was moved on Monday. [II.A]

W56 Dismantlement Operations: While performing W56 cell operations on Tuesday, BWXT personnel noticed an unexpected spark from a weapon component. The spark was generated when a production technician attempted to loosen a screw with a screwdriver and mallet as allowed in the procedure. Production technicians suspended operations when they noticed the spark and contacted the program engineer. After evaluating the issue, BWXT decided a potential inadequacy exists in the W56 hazard analysis. The W56 hazard analysis does not evaluate the risk from a spark or from a slip of the screwdriver for the weapon configuration that existed at the time of the spark. An interim compensatory measure was identified to require the weapon configuration at the time of screw removal to be more similar to a configuration previously analyzed for bay operations.

BWXT will request that the design agency (LLNL) provide weapon response for the scenarios and configuration discussed above. If LLNL does not screen the weapon response, BWXT must develop a justification for continued operations or W56 hazard analysis change to identify a specific control for the scenarios discussed above. This is the second occurrence this year in which the W56 operating environment was not consistent with dismantlement operations as analyzed in the W56 hazard analysis. The W56 hazard analysis does not meet the requirements of 10 CFR 830, but NNSA issued a permanent exemption from those requirements based on the limited life of the W56 dismantlement program. [II.A]