

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

MEMO TO: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: Timothy Hunt and Dave Kupferer, Pantex Site Representatives
DATE: 9 June 2006
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Weekly Report

DNFSB Activity: The Board and headquarters staff were on-site this week to discuss safety issues with BWXT and PXSO management in addition to observing plant-wide operations. B. Broderick was on-site to review recently approved authorization basis change packages.

W56 Dismantlement: During a dissolution process, excess material was removed from a component which has compromised its structural integrity. A subsequent procedural step requires force be applied to this component to complete its removal from the unit. A concern with potential component cracking or breaking is compelling BWXT to revise the dismantlement process to possibly mummify the component with tape to stabilize it during removal. It initially appears inattention to detail on the part of the technicians has contributed to this problem.

W70 Disassembly: The W70 campaign concluded this week with the last of the units being processed. BWXT overcame numerous tooling and equipment problems to safely finish the project a few months ahead of schedule. More than 100 of the deactivated W70 components remain at Pantex due to a lack of off-site shipping containers.

Justification for Continued Operation (JCO) Format/Methodology: Last week, subsequent to receiving new weapons response information from LANL, BWXT declared a Potentially Inadequate Safety Analysis (PISA) and suspended ongoing W76 operations. Specifically, there were three scenarios in which the weapon response likelihood, given a particular insult, increased. This week, PXSO approved a JCO that analyzed the concerns contained in the PISA and BWXT resumed W76 operations. In the Safety Evaluation Report that approved the JCO, PXSO stated that "the JCO did not adequately discuss the unmitigated likelihood of postulated accident scenarios, which, in some cases, were necessary given no new controls were established." PXSO has directed BWXT to develop a JCO format and content guidance document by August 2006.

W88 Limited Scope Operations: BWXT has requested two specific NA-122 actions to be completed prior to 1 August in order to meet the current schedule for restarting limited scope W88 cell operations by 31 October. BWXT requested that NA-122 grant a temporary exemption to the requirements of 10CFR Part 830.207(a) (submittal of a documented safety analysis) and that NA-122 reinstate approval of the W88 NESS that was performed in 1994. W88 readiness activities are currently scheduled to start 1 August.

Component Evaluation Facility (CEF): BWXT recently requested guidance from PXSO regarding the strategy for design and construction of CEF to meet Critical Decision (CD)-1. It is expected that changes to the execution strategy will include a revision to the schedule to reflect Title II design will be at least 90 percent complete before the CD-2 request and revision of the acquisition strategy to show a third party responsible for solicitation, contract award, and administration of architect-engineer services (Titles I, II, and III) and facility construction. If changes are confirmed, CD-2 authorization will be delayed beyond current schedule of February 2007.