

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

MEMO TO: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: Timothy Hunt and Dave Kupferer, Pantex Site Representatives
DATE: 30 June 2006
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Weekly Report

BWXT Reorganization: Last week, the Pantex General Manager announced his plans to reorganize the BWXT management structure, which included the following actions:

- Carl Durham was promoted to Engineering and Operations Director, a new position, and will be focused on driving improvements in Engineering and Manufacturing and improving communication processes between Pantex and the rest of the complex,
- Tom Gallegos was promoted to Manufacturing Division Manager, and
- Russell Daniel was promoted to Engineering Division Manager.

Operations Center (OC) Loss of Power: On 14 May, the OC lost power to its communications and monitoring systems. The only safety systems affected were the lightning warning and thermal monitoring systems. On Wednesday, the OC lost power again. While the causes of the two incidents were very different, the consequences were similar. BWXT responded to the event by issuing lightning warnings, initiating a fire watch, and putting all facilities into a maintenance mode. Limited OC capabilities were temporarily relocated to the Security Command Center. The procedures that direct BWXT personnel in these type of scenarios are insufficient. However, it appears that the actions taken were appropriate. BWXT will need to shut-down the power to the OC sometime in the future in order to conduct electrical repair.

Electrostatic Discharge (ESD) Environment Characterization: In a letter dated 20 June, representatives from Los Alamos National Laboratory, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Sandia National Laboratories and BWXT all concurred that defining the Pantex voltage environment to be 12 kV is appropriate until the new environment is finalized. This is important because the W76 Hazard Analysis Report (HAR) is based on a 12kV environment. It appears that the laboratories are continuing to assume different voltage environments as part of the weapons response development process. This is surprising since, at the direction of PXSO, BWXT has developed an approved method for characterizing the Pantex ESD environment.

B61 SS-21: The B61 became the second insensitive high explosive weapon program to implement SS-21 processes when dismantlement and disassembly and inspection (D&I) operations were fully authorized this week. Upon granting approval of the Nuclear Explosive Safety Study (NESS), NA-12 directed that a B61 NESS Validation be performed at the earliest opportunity and PXSO should closely monitor initial multi-unit/multi-team operations. Limited authorization was accorded last month for the ALT 357 life extension program D&I and rebuild and the first production unit was delivered this week.

W80 Restart: At the request of PXSO, BWXT provided two options for restarting the W80 D&I that would allow completion of seven surveillance backlog units in fiscal year 2007. One option assumes NES approval, a 10CFR830-compliant HAR, and readiness assessments will not be required, existing processes and tooling will remain unchanged, and weapon responses developed for SS-21 will not be incorporated into the current process. The second option is similar to the first with the exception that readiness reviews will be performed and new controls from SS-21 weapon responses will be assimilated into the existing process. The ongoing W80 SS-21 development process was scheduled to be completed in November 2007. Executing either restart option will delay SS-21 implementation by six to ten months due to reallocation of resources.

W56 Dismantlement: Nuclear explosive operations on the W56 program concluded this week.