

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 31, 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: H. Waugh and W. White, Pantex Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending May 31, 2002

DNFSB Activity Summary: The Pantex Plant and DNFSB Pantex Site Office were closed on Monday for the Memorial Day holiday.

Paint Bay Safety Evaluation Report (SER): Earlier this week, NNSA issued its SER approving the Basis for Interim Operations (BIO) for the new paint bay at Pantex. The SER contained ten pre-start conditions of approval and eighteen comments requiring resolution on a post-start basis. One pre-start condition requires a control to be added to preclude operation of an abrasive blast booth when a nuclear explosive is in the paint bay. Another requires that the wet pipe sprinkler system in the paint hood be identified as a safety-significant control. Several of the other pre-start conditions of approval relate to the manner in which safety controls are captured in the TSRs. BWXT is currently evaluating the impact of the pre-start findings. Readiness verification activities should begin following completion of the pre-start conditions of approval. A contractor operational readiness review (ORR), NNSA NESS, and NNSA ORR are required prior to start up of the facility. [II.A]

2040 Sealed-Insert Container: NNSA, BWXT, and national laboratory personnel met at the Pantex Plant on Thursday to review the project plan and design for the 2040 sealed-insert container. The most recent schedule shows delivery of a pilot lot of the containers by September 24, 2002, with implementation of the container in the pit packaging process by November 2003. This container is needed to accommodate certain pit types whose packaged dimensions are not compatible with the existing 2030 sealed-insert container. In addition to changing the physical dimensions of the sealed-insert in the 2040 design, the project team also plans to replace the Celotex packing material with a foam insert material. The project team expects the replacement of the Celotex by a foam material to minimize corrosion concerns and allow the use of carbon steel in lieu of Inconel alloy 718 stainless steel for bolts in the 2040 sealed-insert. [II.A]

Procedural Adherence: Earlier this month, OASO transmitted to BWXT a report documenting recent observations on procedural adherence by OASO facility representatives. OASO requested that BWXT use the report as input to its consolidated corrective action plan addressing the procedural adherence issue. The OASO report identified one 'issue' and two 'weaknesses.' The issue noted was inadequate understanding by operators of procedural compliance. Facility representatives noted two observations, in particular, where technicians failed to identify procedural deficiencies and stop work. One weakness identified by the facility representatives was a continued concern with the adequacy of nuclear explosive operating procedures. The report cites nine examples of procedure errors or inadequacies.

The report also identified, however, that, "with the exception of the issues and weaknesses noted, operations were conducted at an acceptable level of formality." Of particular note, the report speaks highly of W78 bay operations, which were described as "well organized, efficiently performed, and in compliance with all requirements."

The BWXT consolidated corrective action plan to address the procedural adherence issue was published last week. Inadequate procedures was identified as the root cause for the issue. Contributing causes identified were inadequate training on procedures, inadequate personnel response to problems encountered during execution of work, and management issues. The corrective action plan identifies over 75 individual corrective actions, many of which have already been completed. These actions do not include the steps taken to address material movement concerns. Those actions are covered under a separate plan. [II.A]