

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

January 12, 2001

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: H. Waugh and W. White, Pantex Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending January 12, 2001

DNFSB Activity Summary: H. Waugh was on site all week. W. White was on site Tuesday through Friday. A. Matteucci was on site Tuesday through Friday to observe the continuation of the nuclear explosive safety study for W87 lightning protection controls and to attend a nuclear explosive safety meeting concerning the future of master studies.

Certification of DT-23 Shipping Containers: The Pantex Plant issued an occurrence report regarding a lapse in certification for the DT-23 shipping container. The *Technical Safety Requirements for Pantex Facilities* mandate that any nuclear material stored in Building 12-66 be stored in a DOT Type B approved container. The DOT Type B Certification for a DT-23 shipping container in Building 12-66 lapsed on January 1, 2001. Other DT-23 containers in Building 12-58 also have lapsed certification, but storage in a DOT Type B approved container is not required for nuclear material in that building. MHC is unable to move the material in Building 12-66 to Building 12-58 since on-site transportation also requires an approved container. To allow transportation or continued staging in Building 12-66, MHC is writing a justification for continued operations until re-certification of the container can be accomplished. In the interim, a standing order was issued to prohibit additional operations involving the DT-23 container. Container certification is the responsibility of the Y-12 Plant in Oak Ridge and may take several months.

Although DOE Albuquerque and MHC personnel were aware that the DT-23 certification was about to expire, no proactive action was taken to maintain the certification since no off-site shipments in the container were planned in the near future. The link between container certification and the authorization basis for on-site operations was not made in a timely manner. The occurrence is similar to the issue regarding DOT 6M containers discussed in previous weekly reports. The Pantex Plant does not yet have an adequate system for tracking the expiration of shipping container certifications in a manner consistent with expectations for TSR controls. This stems, in part, from the fact that container certification is not controlled or accomplished by MHC or local DOE personnel. ^[II.A]

W88 Surveillance Operations: DOE authorized the resumption of W88 disassembly and inspection operations on Monday, January 8, and MHC began operations on Tuesday. The operations were reviewed and authorized under a Step 1 SS-21 process that established a documented safety basis for existing operations. A complete overhaul of W88 operations under SS-21 principles may not be complete until FY06. ^[II.A]

Emergency Lighting: A violation of technical safety requirements occurred this week when Building 12-84, Bay 1 was not placed in maintenance mode after an emergency light was identified as being inoperable during facility pre-operational checks. The TSR requires the facility to be placed into maintenance mode by the end of the current shift when one emergency light is found to be inoperable. Bay 1 in Building 12-84 was not placed in maintenance mode until two shifts later due to a lapse in communications between the operations manager and the facility manager. The occurrence is the fourth violation of technical safety requirements in the past month and is very similar to an occurrence in June 2000 in which Building 12-96 was not placed in maintenance mode in a timely manner after the discovery of an inoperable emergency light. Of particular interest, the facility representative noted in the occurrence report for the June occurrence that the corrective actions taken would not prevent future occurrences. ^[II.A]