

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 9, 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director

FROM: T. Dwyer and H. Waugh, Pantex Site Representatives

SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending June 9, 2000

DNFSB Activity Summary: T. Dwyer and H. Waugh were on site all week.

Pit Issues: On Wednesday, M&H filed Occurrence Report ALO-AO-MHC-PANTEX-2000-0054, identifying an over-temperature condition in a Building 12-99 bay in which pits were being staged. Although filed as an “off-normal” occurrence, the report should have been classified as unusual: [1] this is at least the 4th potential pit over-temperature incident in the last year -- and the 2nd in this bay in the last 2 months; [2] M&H reporting of the events has been the subject of several disputes; [3] M&H investigation of the events, especially with regard to potential HVAC defects, has been less than satisfactory; and [4] corrective actions developed by M&H after each event have not been completely carried out, and [witness this event] are evidently inadequate. Taken as a whole, these factors paint a picture of an organization that has lost institutional control of the program. At present, there appears to be no accountability for pit staging locations, no means of providing adequate monitoring or warning when facilities that require active cooling and contain pits are *in extremis*, and no ownership of the program from either the SNM Program side or the Facility Management side of the house.^[III.A]

AL-R8 Sealed Insert (SI) Repackaging Line: Minor equipment problems have slowed both AL-R8 SI Repackaging Lines somewhat this week [e.g., vacuum pumps, pneumatic tools], and pumpdown difficulties are still being experienced with certain pit types. However, the major impediments to progress occurred at the facility level. Both bays were shut down for multiple shifts due to facility hoists failing their in-service inspections. Although both lines are now operating, M&H is still struggling to finish the required thermistored AL-R8 SIs for the Zone 4 thermal testing [overdue for June 1st start]. This project has taken longer than planned due to mechanical difficulties with the thermistors themselves. Throughput this week was 22.^[III.A]

B61 Mod 10 Project: M&H completed the contractor Readiness Assessment (RA) for the B61 Mod 10 Project today. The final report is still being drafted, but ~11 pre-start findings have been identified. Corrective actions are not expected to delay the start of next week’s NESS and DOE RA. The RA Team review was hindered by security issues -- in fact, the RA Team did not have access to the hazard analysis prepared for this project. With regard to the readiness process itself, once again M&H declared readiness prematurely. When the RA Team convened, safety basis documentation was not complete [in fact, 1 pre-start finding identifies that 3 of 5 USQEs associated with this project remain incomplete]; procedures were not complete; training of PTs was in progress; and the facility was not ready.^[III.A]

Lightning Issues: The contractor RA on the upgraded lightning authorization basis has been delayed 2-3 weeks. AAO informed M&H that the lightning requirements specific to 2 families of weapons currently stored in Zone 4 [in unvalidated Faraday cages] must be explicitly stated in the TSRs, rather than in a [limited] JCO. The delay was therefore required to allow development and approval of the necessary TSR change package.^[III.A]