

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 23, 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director

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

SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending April 23, 1999

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

W56 Dismantlement Program: This week, M&H attempted to dismantle a W56 that has never undergone D&I. Neither the current dismantlement tooling nor the redesigned removal tooling was successful. M&H, LLNL, DOE-AL, and Y-12 personnel have met, and several options are being developed. LLNL has committed, in particular, to make additional experts available to the Project Team. Y-12 personnel are investigating previous returns -- they are concerned about exceeding the breakaway torque on the secondary bonding. Of note, a potential programmatic impact has been identified as a result of the lack of W56 secondary returns.

W62 D&I Program: The W62 D&I Project Team briefed the Standing Management Team (SMT) on Thursday, receiving concurrence that Milestones 1 and 2 had been satisfied pending completion of a list of approximately 1 dozen action items. Key points of the briefing included: 1] all upgraded tooling necessary for the short term safety improvements is now on site; 2] the initial draft of the HAR is being revised [due May 13th] based on extensive comments from AAO and DOE-AL reviewers; 3] trainer repairs are still in progress; 4] of the 3 major NEOPS, 1 is ready for internal NES, ES&H, and Design Agency reviews, but the other 2 require significant work; and 5] PT resources are scarce, given the fact that most W62 PTs are cross-trained to the W87. It was also indicated that a significant potential issue raised during the aborted W62 NESS last summer has been resolved after meetings at SNL.

AL-R8 Sealed Insert Program: Physical issues appear to be delaying the startup of the Sealed Insert program by at least 3 weeks. The long poles appear to be utility [electrical] system incompatibilities with the new equipment in Building 12-64, and delays in the receipt of process procedures and drawings [possibly tied in to the recent Design Agency security stand-downs].

Violation of Administrative Controls: As one of the immediate corrective actions taken by M&H as a result of the March 29th W87 tester occurrence [see ALO-AO-MHSM-1999-0026, Improper Application of PT-4030 Tester], Manufacturing Division instituted a new standing order [#99MFG-130], which constituted an additional Administrative Control on use of any tester in a nuclear explosives area. This control will remain in place until the Engineering & Design Division can complete an evaluation of the engineered controls that exist to prevent such a tester misapplication -- the evaluation is continuing. The AAO Manager authorized resumption of work based on M&H institution of this control. On Tuesday, it was discovered that PTs/OMs for at least 1 weapons program were not observing this control [see ALO-AO-MHSM-1999-0034]. Further, at the critique for this occurrence, it became obvious that neither the M&H Production Manager, M&H NES representative, nor the Manufacturing Division representative understood the safety implications of this violation, or of the original W87 tester occurrence.