

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 12, 1998

MEMORANDUM FOR: G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director
FROM: T. Dwyer and H. Waugh, Pantex Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending June 12, 1998

DNFSB Activity Summary: Harry Waugh and Timothy Dwyer were on site all week. William White was on site Tuesday thru Friday observing W62 NESS Revalidation activity.

W79 Cell Dissolution: Dissolution of the first W79 unit was completed by 3:15 a.m. Tuesday morning. However, some difficulties involved with the dissolution station clean-up cycle precluded completion of the entire NEOP until Tuesday evening. Part of the difficulty was attributed to a minor procedural defect. However, the physical problem was that the hot water system was maintaining the temperature several degrees too low due to errors during system recalibration, following upgrading of the water temperature sensors (RTDs) to meet National Electric Code (NEC) Class 2 Division 2.g criteria. Work on the 2nd unit commenced late Tuesday, but was stopped for record/photography purposes during midplate separation, due to an anomalous condition (determined to have no effect on safety) that LLNL wanted completely documented. Because of the desire to generate several NEOP refinements and scheduled facility maintenance, restart of operations on the 2nd unit will not begin until next Wednesday.

W62 NESS Revalidation: Revalidation of the existing, expired W62 NESS began on Wednesday. The revalidation involves only D&I activities; neither assembly nor retirement are addressed. Potential issues raised during this week's technical briefings include W62 response to abnormal electrical environments/deliberate unauthorized activities; excessive electrical tests during disassembly; generic seismic concerns; and the failure of certain tooling to meet vacuum standard requirements. Also discussed were continuing delays in completing the 2 tester upgrades requested in the expired 1992 NESS. Of note, at least one NESS group member questioned the appropriateness of conducting this revalidation, given the volume of new information and the substantial changes in the conduct of nuclear explosive operations since the 1992 NESS. Discussion on this comment was postponed until the conclusion of the NESS revalidation.

Pit Issues: The Design Agencies, DOE-HQ, DOE-AL, AAO, and M&H convened a meeting Thursday to finalize the specifications for storage of pits in Sealed Inserts. Based on observation of this unorganized event, it was apparent that there is no technical basis for the limits imposed in the moisture requirement, no technical basis for the blanket imaging requirement, no technical analysis to validate the acceptability of the existing pit support structure ["birdcage"], and no technical basis for determination of pit repackaging priorities. In a related development, M&H has initiated procurement of the pilot lot (30 units) of Sealed Inserts.

Building 12-116: The Building 12-116 DOE ORR has been delayed one week, to June 22nd. M&H management pushed hard to maintain the scheduled date, but the AAO manager [correctly] refused to consider signing a letter of readiness until he was satisfied with the condition of the facility and status of the workforce. One particular point of contention was the 12-116 HVAC system. It is not specifically identified as a critical safety system in the 12-116 SAR, so M&H contended deficiencies in its operation would not preclude conducting the ORR. The AAO manager would not accept this argument. Independent Site Representative observations confirm that the facility is not yet operationally ready for start up.

Attachment
Upcoming Pantex Events:

Now thru June 19 -- W62 NES Revalidation [ongoing]

June 15-18 -- U.K visit - SS21

June 16 -- W87 ASSET Team ABCD/Hazard Review Report Markup Meeting**

???? -- W87 ASSET Final Management Team Review [postponed]**

June 22-July 3 -- Building 12-116 DOE ORR**

June 25 -- Pit Thermal Meeting

??July?? -- Building 12-116 startup

July 7 -- Quarterly NMO Program Meeting

July 8 -- Quarterly Production Meeting

July 9-13 -- NES Electrical Tester Master Study SIID validation [adequacy review]

???? -- B61-7 Limited Readiness Assessment

July 23 -- W78 SEP

July 27-31 -- B53 Aft Cap Assy Cover NESS

July 30-August 26 -- NES Electrical Tester Master Study

August 28 -- Bldg 12-104A Paint Bay MSA commences

NOTES: ** highlights events which are new listings or for which schedule has changed