

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

MEMO TO: Timothy Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: Matthew Duncan and Rory Rauch, Pantex Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Report for Week Ending July 15, 2011

DNFSB Staff Activity: D. Andersen, J. Anderson, and M. Dunlevy were onsite to review the adequacy of the supporting calculations for a sampling of technical safety requirements. B. Laake, C. Martin, and W. Von Holle were onsite to discuss beyond design basis accidents.

Work Planning: This week, during an electrical switching operation to support maintenance on an electrical substation that feeds a nuclear facility, utility technicians inadvertently removed primary power to the wrong facility (the secondary power supply to the facility functioned as designed at that point). The technicians that removed primary power from the wrong facility did so while performing a supplementary operation to the work being performed at the substation. The operation involved opening the breakers at the equipment room fed by the substation to shed current and prevent the breakers from tripping upon restoration of power. The technicians assigned to perform this supplementary operation lacked familiarity with the facility layout and went to the wrong electrical equipment room. This operation had not been documented in a procedure, thus those responsible for planning the work likely never had a chance to consider implementing some form of verification that the correct breakers were being opened. B&W senior management has directed a human performance improvement study as a part of the upcoming causal analysis of this event to ensure to ensure a similar error does not occur.

The deluge fire suppression system in the facility that experienced the unplanned loss of primary power is the only safety system that requires the initiation of a limiting condition for operation (LCO) upon loss of primary power. Per the LCO action statements, the responsible facility manager ensured that all material had been placed in a safe and stable configuration and the designated fire protection engineer determined that a fire watch was not necessary. It should be noted that this LCO had already been entered for the facility where the outage was planned.

Nuclear Safety Officer (NSO) Staffing: The core responsibility of an NSO is to provide day-to-day coaching and mentoring of conduct of operations for the manufacturing division, though they also perform manufacturing readiness validations and other targeted assessments (e.g., the assessment of conduct of operations at the Special Nuclear Material (SNM) Component Requalification Facility, see 4/1/11 report). In last 18 months, B&W management has expanded the scope of the NSO day-to-day coaching and mentoring function to include SNM division operations and weapon training activities. This week, an individual from the authorization basis department accepted a position as the fifth NSO. This addition should help the NSO department continue to provide day-to-day coaching and mentoring of conduct of nuclear explosive operations in the face of an ever-increasing demand for their conduct of operations expertise.

Personal Reliability Campaign: In response to recent quality and formality of operations-related problems, B&W is kicking off a personal reliability campaign. B&W senior management will hold a series of meetings with plant personnel in the coming weeks to stress the importance of personal reliability as the last barrier between a postulated threat and an unacceptable event.