

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

MEMO TO: Timothy Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: Rory Rauch, Pantex Site Representative
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Report for Week Ending June 15, 2012

W78 Tooling Upgrade Project: Sandia National Laboratories and Los Alamos National Laboratory, in the spirit of continuous improvement, are in the process of reassessing the weapon response estimates used in the W76 hazard analysis report for technical accuracy and defensibility. This initiative may also impact the weapon response estimates for the W78 and W88 hazard analysis reports. Both design agencies have additional analysis and testing to perform before this reassessment is complete (the first batch of potentially modified estimates is anticipated in November 2012), but B&W is already making changes to directed stockpile work activities in anticipation that these estimates may drive process changes. B&W plans to shift its resources to support moving all but one of the W78 surveillance units that would have been processed in the fiscal year (FY) 2013 cycle into FY 2012. Further, B&W is likely to postpone the project to implement special tooling upgrades for W78 operations—originally scheduled for first quarter FY 2013—to FY 2014 or later. The intent of this postponement is to avoid having to redo readiness activities if the new weapon response estimates drive additional tooling modifications. These tooling upgrades are the primary corrective action for a post-start finding from the W78 Operational Safety Review performed in December 2009.

Safety Culture Assessment: The Department of Energy's Office of Health, Safety, and Security (HSS) was at Pantex this week to perform scoping activities for a safety culture assessment of B&W Pantex. HSS's decision to perform this safety culture assessment stems largely from the extent-of-condition review specified in the implementation plan for Board Recommendation 2011-1, *Safety Culture at the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant*, and the Board's letter of March 2, 2012, which identified concerns with the effectiveness of the B&W Pantex nuclear explosive safety program. The assessment team plans to utilize multiple tools to assess B&W Pantex's organizational behaviors. These tools include semi-structured interviews and focus groups, behavioral observations and checklists, and a safety culture survey. The team plans to administer the safety culture survey from June 25 – July 13, perform observations and interviews from July 23 – August 2, provide a debriefing to site management and possibly a subset of plant personnel on August 28, and issue the final report in October 2012.

B83 Operations: This week, technicians paused a B83 disassembly and inspection operation after recognizing that the procedure could not be performed as written. The unit had just been radiographed, and the radiography technicians (in accordance with their procedure) had left the unit in a position that would not allow it to mate with the special tooling in the operations bay. Before operations can resume, the process engineer plans to annotate the operations bay procedure to add a step that directs the technicians to rotate the unit to the correct position.

Unreviewed Safety Question (USQ) Procedure: PXSO approved a revision to the B&W Pantex USQ procedure this week. The most significant change adds a statement to reinforce the expectation that B&W Pantex, following a positive USQ determination, place the affected operation in a safe and stable configuration and pause the operation until PXSO approves the evaluation of the safety of the situation.