

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

MEMO TO: Timothy Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: Tom Spatz, Pantex Site Representative
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Report for Week Ending January 18, 2013

Nuclear Explosive Safety (NES): This week, B&W Pantex paused nuclear explosive operations in all bays and cells when NNSA did not meet the deadline to conduct a Bays and Cells Nuclear Explosive Safety Master Study (NESMS). This pause did not affect operations that do not involve nuclear explosives, including Joint Test Assembly, transportation, staging, and special purpose facility operations. Master Studies evaluate facilities, equipment, tooling, processes, and management programs that may be common to multiple nuclear explosive operations (NEOs) to determine if they are adequately characterized and controlled to support NEOs.

The previous Bays and Cells NESMS was approved by NNSA on January 11, 2008. According to the *Nuclear Explosive Safety Evaluation Process* (DOE M 452.2-2), a NESMS must be conducted every five years. However, if a NESMS cannot be conducted within the five-year interval, the responsible NNSA site office manager is to send an extension request to NA-12 at least 30 days prior to the deadline and receive approval for the extension prior to the five-year anniversary. The deadline for NNSA to have conducted a Bays and Cells NESMS was January 11, 2013. DOE M 452.2-2 contains no explicit requirement for the expiration of a master study and NNSA considers the existing master study with the reviewed and approved changes are still valid. B&W paused nuclear explosive operations on January 13, 2013, when it was known that a Bays and Cells NESMS had not been conducted; nor had an extension request been sent by the NNSA Production Office (NPO) or approved by NA-12.

DOE M 452.2-2 contains a list of specific information that must be contained in an extension request. It also states that NA-12 must establish that the extension is warranted under the circumstances and continuing operations would not present undue risk. On January 17, 2013, B&W sent an extension request letter to NA-12, thru NPO. B&W's extension request letter addressed all the specific justification information listed in DOE M 452.2-2. NA-12 approved the extension request the same day, stating that in the future NA-12 expects timely and proper notification by all parties in accordance with DOE M 452.2-2. B&W resumed nuclear explosive operations late in the week.

B&W sent a letter to NPO requesting NNSA convene the Bays and Cells NESMS on or before April 1, 2013.