

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 13, 2015

MEMO TO: Steven Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: Thomas Spatz, Pantex Site Representative
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Report for Week Ending March 13, 2015

Update on Positive Unreviewed Safety Question Determination (USQD) for Anodized Coating Electro-Static Discharge (ESD) Scenario: In December 2014, Consolidated Nuclear Security, LLC (CNS) declared a positive USQD and paused operations on one weapon program when they were notified by the Design Agency that an anodized coating on one component may challenge the dissipative control requirements in the safety basis. Subsequently, the DA sent CNS an IER requiring the addition of two new personnel bonding steps to maintain the applicability of existing weapon response information. (See reports for 2/27/2015.) This week, CNS submitted a revised Justification for Continued Operations (JCO) to resume full operations on this weapon program. In the JCO, CNS proposed implementing the two personnel bonding steps; one is for worker safety and the other is a safety-class control. One of these bonding steps is associated with the ESD hazard identified with the use of an aerosol can on a different program (described below).

CNS issued the original JCO to address the kneeling technician ESD hazard. (See report for 9/26/2014.) The first revision was associated with resuming limited operations on units in the Ultimate User configuration. (See reports for 1/9/2015, 1/16/2015, 1/23/2015, and 1/30/2015.) The second revision is to resume all operations on this weapon program, and the JCO now has a new expiration date of September 30, 2015. At the time of this report, the NNSA Production Office (NPO) had not issued a Safety Evaluation Report (SER) and operations on this weapon program remained paused.

Update on Positive USQD for Aerosol Can ESD Scenario: CNS declared a positive USQD when they discovered that the coating on an aerosol can defeats the personnel bonding control for one weapon program. (See report for 2/27/2015.) This week, NPO issued the SER approving the JCO submitted by CNS last week. The SER authorizes operations to continue with the implementation of a new worker safety control. The control is the application of conductive tape from the un-coated bottom of the aerosol can to the side of the can. This control establishes a pathway to ground through the Production Technician (PT) holding the can. This JCO will expire in 180 days following the issuance of the SER. CNS has trained the PTs on the changes to the procedures, and resumed aerosol can operations on this weapon program.

Update on Anomalous Unit: On January 29, 2015, representatives from CNS Process Engineering, CNS Nuclear Explosive Safety, and the Design Agency determined that the configuration of the nuclear explosive in one facility met the anomalous unit criteria. (See reports for 1/30/2015, 2/13/2015, and 2/20/2015.) The Design Agency sent a Special Instruction Engineering Release (SIER) to CNS with detailed instruction on how to proceed with the disassembly process. In the SIER, the Design Agency specified the use of a particular type of tape which is not currently authorized for use in the Documented Safety Analysis (DSA). CNS has decided to prepare an authorization basis change package to incorporate this tape into the DSA, rather than submit a JCO to process this one unit. The Nuclear Explosive Safety Change Evaluation will be delayed until change to the DSA is approved.