DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 8, 2015

MEMO TO: Steven Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: Zachery Beauvais, Acting Pantex Site Representative
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Report for Week Ending May 8, 2015

DNFSB Staff Activity: R. Tontodonato and J. Deplitch were onsite this week and attended the quarterly status meeting between state and local officials and personnel from the Pantex Plant on the Pantex Agreement in Principle.

Quality Pause: On May 4, 2015, the Consolidated Nuclear Security, LLC (CNS), Pantex Site Manager directed a pause in operations to allow managers to discuss the importance of quality with their workers. Managers structured their discussions around a series of general questions regarding the consequences of incorrect work and how workers can improve their performance. The pause was called following recent quality issues with joint test assembly (JTA) builds. JTA and test-bed operations remain paused while most other plant activities have resumed.

Electro-Static Discharge (ESD) Hazards: In March 2015, a Hazard Analysis Task Team discovered that the material used in packaging certain configurations of two weapons programs in Army-Navy (AN) containers did not prevent ESD hazards to the configurations being packaged (see 3/27/15 report). CNS previously paused operations for one of the affected programs for a Potential Inadequacy of the Safety Analysis (PISA) related to the validity of the Weapon Response Summary Document and was also working to address ESD concerns related to use of aerosol cans. On May 5, 2015, the NNSA Assistant Deputy Administrator for Stockpile Management (NA-12) declared a "Code Blue" to address the ESD hazards for packaging certain configurations in AN containers. Declaration of a Code Blue results from an issue's impact on NNSA's scheduled deliverables. The Code Blue authorizes the creation of a response team that will work on the issue until it is resolved. CNS issued Information Engineering Releases to the Design Agencies and is developing plans for a separate long term solution to address AN container ESD hazards outside the scope of the Code Blue response.

Special Tooling Safety Catch Damage: CNS has completed an Engineering Evaluation of disassembly vacuum fixtures following discovery of cracked safety catches on multiple copies of these tools currently in use (see 5/1/15 report). The safety catches perform a safety-class function. Through load testing, the engineering evaluation determined that the degraded safety catches would have been able to perform their credited safety function if called upon. Copies of the tools with degraded features, including the tool in place for an anomalous unit, will be removed from service and replaced with intact copies. The exact cause of cracking is unknown, but CNS plans to redesign the shipping container insert used for this tool to prevent one possible cracking mechanism. CNS did not declare a PISA, and the Unreviewed Safety Question determination for this concern concluded no safety basis changes are necessary. The issue will be reported in the DOE Occurrence Reporting and Processing System.

Criticality Safety: CNS personnel from the Y-12 National Security Complex were at Pantex this week to conduct a periodic criticality safety program self-assessment. NNSA Production Office (NPO) personnel from Y-12 and an additional NNSA criticality safety subject matter expert were onsite to observe the assessment. NPO conducts its oversight of the Pantex Plant criticality safety program from the Y-12 office.