

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

September 18, 2015

MEMO TO: Steven Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: Zachery Beauvais, Pantex Site Representative
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Report for Week Ending September 18, 2015

DNFSB Staff Activity: R. Arnold was onsite to augment the Board's site coverage. While onsite, Mr. Arnold observed preventive maintenance activities performed on a safety-class fire protection system by non-bargaining unit personnel.

Transportation Operations: On September 12, 2015, a Consolidated Nuclear Security, LLC (CNS) independent review team completed a Contractor Readiness Assessment (CRA) to restart limited transportation operations (see 9/11/2015 report). CNS and the NNSA Production Office (NPO) determined that the CRA was necessary due to the significant changes to staffing resulting from the work stoppage—in lieu of bargaining unit employees executing their normal transportation operation duties, the CRA verified the readiness of supervisory personnel to perform these limited transportation operations. The CRA focused on areas that changed due to the unique situation; for several of the criteria there were no changes due to the work stoppage (e.g., the safety basis for transportation operations was unaffected). The CRA review team focused on confirming that all alternate personnel, including operators and those providing support functions through safety management programs, had completed the proper training and qualification. The CRA review team did not identify any findings, observations, or lessons learned based on their review. NPO shadowed portions of the CRA and did not note any significant concerns regarding the execution of the CRA.

As the startup authorization authority, the Pantex Site Manager approved the CRA report. Subsequently, CNS contingency staff executed limited transportation operations within the scope of the CRA early this week. Amongst other limited transportation operations, CNS moved a nuclear explosive from the facility affected by a recent Det-Tronics Fire Alarm Control Panel trouble signal (see 9/11/2015 report). CNS has now exited the Limiting Conditions for Operation and placed the facility in repair mode.

Anomalous Unit Justification for Continued Operations (JCO): On September 10, 2015, CNS submitted a JCO to NPO to continue electrical testing and disassembly of two anomalous units. The two units had each experienced an out-of-tolerance measurement during the same detonator cable assembly electrical test (see 4/17/2015 and 8/14/2015 reports). The out-of-tolerance test results indicated the potential for a condition not specifically evaluated in the applicable Hazard Analysis Report. In the JCO, CNS proposes additional controls in order to establish a 100 volt electrostatically dissipative environment for the operations. The controls specified to achieve this include procedural steps to wipe components and equipment with distilled water to remove excess static charge and bonding production technicians and equipment during the testing steps. NPO is currently reviewing the JCO. Pending NPO approval, operations on these units will not resume until the Nuclear Explosive Safety (NES) Study Group conducts a NES Change Evaluation and qualified personnel are available to execute the procedure.