

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 4, 2025

**TO:** Technical Director  
**FROM:** Pantex Plant Resident Inspectors  
**SUBJECT:** Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending April 4, 2025

**Special Tooling:** Last week, PXD personnel discovered a copy of special tooling being used for nuclear explosive operations beyond the preventive maintenance due date listed on the equipment sticker. This week, during the event critique, PXD personnel noted that special tooling program material handlers had delivered the tooling to a nuclear explosive bay two weeks after the expiration date listed on the equipment sticker. Additionally, PXD operations personnel had not completed the required administrative steps in the sitewide database before moving the tooling. This database tracks tooling and provides a visual indicator if the maintenance due date on the equipment sticker is within two weeks. During the critique, PXD personnel noted that the sticker date is set 30 days before the actual maintenance due date to facilitate handling any logistical issues that may arise when retrieving tools. Among other improvements, PXD special tooling program personnel plan to add operations personnel, including the Senior Director of Weapons Operations Programs, to the distribution list for a weekly report that lists copies of tooling nearing their expiration date. Additionally, PXD operations personnel plan to perform a tooling inventory to identify which tools are currently in operational facilities.

**Material Moved Through Restricted Area:** Last week, the resident inspectors attended the event critique for a recent transport of high-explosive material through a restricted area (see 3/21/2025 report). The PXD personnel in attendance identified performance gaps, including inattention to the barrier sign by both the walker/spotter and the forklift driver, as well as a lack of notifications to applicable PXD organizations regarding the implementation of the barriers. However, PXD did not document any actions to address these concerns within their issue management system during the critique. PXD categorized this event as a management concern. The resident inspectors questioned this categorization since the walker/spotter did not redirect the high-explosive transportation activity away from the posted area within the falldown distance of a degraded catenary pole. PXD safety analysis engineering personnel stated that the associated Technical Safety Requirement only requires a walker/spotter to *accompany* the high explosive in transit and that the barriers were not part of the safety basis. The resident inspectors questioned the effectiveness of the walker/spotter control, as it only requires accompanying an item of interest rather than specific safety functions. Of note, PFO is currently evaluating changes to the walker/spotter control. Additionally, the resident inspectors questioned the practice of utilizing barriers within the rampways to justify placement of the pole cat truck, since the barricades are not a credited control within the safety basis.

**Safety Basis:** Last month, PXD safety analysis engineering declared a potential inadequacy of the safety analysis (PISA) after discovering that the combined weight of certain nuclear explosives and special tooling exceeded values reflected in weapon response documentation for select operations. PXD determined that this PISA represented an unreviewed safety question. As a result, PXD has enacted operational restrictions to prevent the associated nuclear explosives from being introduced into these facilities.