

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 18, 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: T. Dwyer and H. Waugh, Pantex Site Representatives

SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending February 18, 2000

DNFSB Activity Summary: T. Dwyer was on site all week. H. Waugh remains on leave.

Authorization Basis Issues: This week, M&H conducted a Management Self-Assessment of the *Pantex Plant Master Authorization Agreement (AA) for Nuclear Operations* (MNL-258600). The review appeared to be very thorough, and the preliminary findings agree closely with an independent [concurrent] review of the AA conducted by the Board's staff. AAO has already apprised both DOE-AL and M&H that this review is expected to find discrepancies such as inadequately defined scopes of work, incomplete lists of terms and conditions, and inconsistent or missing authorizations. This review is being treated as the chance for a "free" fix before the 60-day transition period [previously authorized by AAO] is closed on March 3rd.^[II.A]

Fire Protection Issues: As noted in the February 4th Site Representative letter, Pantex is planning to reconnect the ultraviolet (UV) actuated deluge systems in many nuclear explosive bays and cells to give greater assurance that incipient fires will be rapidly extinguished. However, the Building 12-44 cells are not scheduled to be included in this activity at present. The installation of a UV actuated deluge system in 12-44 is a more complicated project than in other cells, and is beyond current funding levels. In fact, it is also beyond [draft] FY '01 funding levels, falling below the line on the decrement list. This is significant, given that the [soon-to-restart] W88 Existing Operations Reauthorization Program (EORP), a conventional high explosive operation, has been scheduled to occupy a 12-44 cell. M&H now appears to have recognized that relegating the W88 EORP to a facility not equipped with a UV actuated deluge system would not be a defensible safety decision. Therefore, plans are being made for the W88 EORP to displace the W56 Dismantlement Program cell operation from its current location in early March. [Of note, the W56 Dismantlement Program is not expected to be running in its new location before May.] In a related issue, W79 Dismantlement Program bay operations are being temporarily halted while its facilities undergo scheduled fire protection program upgrades. Therefore, W79 dismantlements will be halted until at least August. Combined, these 2 actions will disrupt this year's dismantlements, but represent definite improvements in fire safety.^[II.A]

Fire Protection Issues (Take 2): The recent series of Fire Protection System valve misalignments [see Occurrence Reports ALO-AO-MHC-PANTEX-2000-0010, ALO-AO-MHC-PANTEX-1999-0083, ALO-AO-MHC-PANTEX-1998-0001] have led M&H to restructure the division of responsibility between Facilities Division personnel and the Fire Department. Fire Department personnel will now be users of the High Pressure Fire Loop, but not owners. Responsibility for control and surveillance/maintenance of all of the Fire Loop will reside with Facilities Division, to include both inside and outside valve operations. This is significant, given the fact that the Fire Loop is being treated as a safety class system -- the number of observed alignment problems led AAO to question the assumed reliability of the system.^[II.A]

Fire Protection Issues (Take 3): AAO and M&H are investigating the implications of a violation of W87 Program combustible loading requirements [referenced in NEOP N87-1004] that was noted during Board member observations of weapons operations last week.^[II.A]

Personnel Issues: Mr. Daniel E. Glenn reported for duty as AAO Manager on Monday.^[I.B]