

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 3, 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: H. Waugh and W. White, Pantex Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending November 3, 2000

DNFSB Activity Summary: H. Waugh and W. White were on site all week.

W88 New Authorization Basis Implementation: The W88 contractor readiness assessment resumed this week, reviewing those areas which failed the previous assessment (configuration management, maintenance, authorization basis flow down, and operations). MHC continued work on an engineering evaluation of the sensitivity and coverage of the ultraviolet detectors. The evaluation, along with final authorization basis changes, should be submitted to DOE early next week.

Although the contractor has not declared readiness to proceed, and DOE has not conducted its Milestone III meeting, the nuclear explosive safety study for restart of W88 operations will begin on Monday, November 6, with briefings from the national laboratories. Two members of the W88 nuclear explosive safety study group will be senior members. The W88 study will be the first with participation by the new senior members.^[II.A]

Lightning Protection: DOE, MHC, and Sandia National Laboratories met this week to discuss Sandia support needed to address remaining open issues related to lightning protection. The meeting concluded with a list of action items and schedule dates for remaining Sandia analysis. The highest priority item was to obtain Sandia support for changes to the authorization basis for W87 operations. MHC will submit proposed authorization basis changes to allow transportation, hoisting, task exhaust, and manifold operations to continue during lightning warnings for the W87 program.^[II.A]

To address the remaining open issues from the *Lightning Basis for Interim Operations*, the associated DOE safety evaluation report, and the recent nuclear explosive safety study, Sandia agreed to the following tasks, listed in order of priority:

- Evaluate common mode voltages and voltage distribution across facilities
- Complete test and analysis reports for 12-50 (separations test facility) and SAC magazines
- Evaluate inductance resulting from penetration bonds (NESS minority report issue)
- Complete 12-104A paint bay evaluation (testing, analysis, and final report)
- Complete reports on lightning protection for 12-64, 12-44, 12-84, and 12-96
- Evaluate slot bonding
- Provide generic criteria for Faraday cages
- Evaluate induced current in direct current testers

Completion of all of these tasks is expected by August 30, 2001.^[II.A]

Certification of RTG Shipping Containers: On October 25, MHC received an email from an engineer at DOE Albuquerque suggesting that the DOT 6M container be discontinued as a shipping container for RTGs due to open questions on the acceptability of RTGs as 'special form' per DOT requirements for the 6M container. If the certification of this shipping container is removed, it could have a significant impact on the authorization basis at Pantex, which generally requires RTGs be stored in approved shipping containers.^[II.A]

Quality Assurance Inspections by DOE AAO: DOE AAO will no longer conduct its own electrical tests of nuclear explosives for quality assurance purposes. Instead, DOE has proposed a new methodology for quality assurance which relies more on inspecting the quality of the process than inspecting quality of the product.^[II.A]