

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 1, 2001

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: H. Waugh and W. White, Pantex Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending June 1, 2001

DNFSB Activity Summary: The Pantex plant was closed on Monday for the Memorial Day Holiday. H. Waugh and W. White were on site for the remainder of the week.

B83 Electrical Test: The nuclear explosive safety program manager at DOE Albuquerque approved the BWXT and design agency proposal to retest a B83 unit which had failed an electrical test in April 2001. Under this proposal, BWXT will continue with the test series that was in progress at the time of the failure. Following completion of that series of electrical tests, BWXT will retest the circuit which had failed previously. If this test is successful, BWXT will continue with disassembly and inspection. If the test fails again, the unit will return to a hold status until approval can be obtained to perform additional troubleshooting. The test is scheduled to be performed on June 5, 2001. [II.A]

Technical Safety Requirement Assessment: BWXT performed a self-assessment of the technical safety requirement (TSR) program at Pantex. The purpose of the assessment was to evaluate the effectiveness of the TSR program implementation. Through document reviews and personnel interviews, BWXT identified 6 weaknesses in the program:

- S** The implementation of TSR administrative controls through general use procedures, reference use procedures, and general safety instructions is problematic.
- S** Program managers for TSR implementation do not ensure that all affected Pantex organizations are involved in the implementation.
- S** Authorization Basis personnel, who perform the technical analysis and obtain approval for the TSRs, do not involve the implementing organizations early enough in the TSR development and approval process.
- S** TSR implementation has not been standardized and institutionalized across the plant.
- S** The implementation of controls, such as fire protection, on a weapon-specific basis is problematic, especially for organizations, such as maintenance, that must work with all weapons programs.
- S** The lessons-learned program for TSR implementation is informal and generally does not cross organizational lines.

The assessment also identified two strengths in the program: TSR implementation continues to improve, and managers are cognizant of the importance of TSRs and their implementation. The review team noted that the phased approach to implementation that will be used for the TSR controls derived from the Fire Basis for Interim Operation has caused significant problems in the past for facilities personnel. [II.A]

Pit Repackaging Program: BWXT repackaged 205 pits into sealed-insert containers for the month of May. This is the second month in row that BWXT has exceeded a 200 pit per month repackaging rate. On a less positive note, issues regarding the quality of the first few lots of Inconel bolts received are still unresolved. Until these issues are resolved, BWXT will continue to use carbon steel bolts in the new sealed-insert containers. [II.A]