

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 15, 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 15, 2001

DNFSB Activity Summary: H. Waugh was on site all week. W. White was on site Monday and Tuesday, and at NNSA's Albuquerque Operations Office for the remainder of the week for a Standing Management Team meeting on the new Integrated Weapons Activity Plan.

W80 Command Disablement Test: On May 30th, NNSA lifted its hold on W80 command disablement operations. Because it has been more than one year since the previous operation, DOE Order 425.1B, *Startup and Restart of Nuclear Facilities*, § 4.a.(1)(c), as implemented by Amarillo Area Office Procedure 115.1.0, Attachment 1, § 1.c, requires a readiness assessment prior to restart. On Monday, BWXT sent NNSA's Amarillo Area Office a startup notification report. The cover letter to the report noted that BWXT considered no readiness reviews to be necessary prior to command disablement operations for reasons discussed in the report.

According to DOE Order 425.1B, a startup notification report should discuss the type of readiness review required for startup and the basis or justification for the proposed type of review. The data provided in the report intended to justify the absence of a readiness review were either inaccurate, irrelevant, or tended to justify why a readiness assessment was necessary.

- S** The report stated that the B61 and W80 command disablement processes were identical. This is not accurate. The test equipment is different, the unit under test is different, the procedures are different, and the mechanism for initiating the test is different.
- S** The report noted that various safety basis documents are in place and the procedures are approved. Not all necessary documents have been approved by DOE yet. Even if they had, this would provide no justification for a waiver of readiness review requirements.
- S** The report noted a Justification for Continued Operations was submitted and that additional compensatory measures were proposed. The report, however, claimed the compensatory measures did not constitute additional controls. Compensatory measures provided as the Justification for Continued Operations do constitute additional controls.
- S** The report stated that the production technicians who were to perform the test had been certified previously and that their certification would be reinstated without any additional training, knowledge or experience requirements. The lack of training with respect to new compensatory measures and the lack of recent experience tend to illustrate the need for refresher training and an appropriately tailored readiness review.

NNSA's Amarillo Area Office had not yet acted upon the report when BWXT retracted it. The subsequent startup notification report recommends a contractor readiness assessment, followed by a NNSA readiness assessment, both using a properly graded approach.[II.A]

W76 Electrical Test: The W76 unit which failed an electrical test last week remains on hold. BWXT and the design agency have proposed additional electrical tests to troubleshoot the failure. These tests will require review and approval by the Nuclear Explosive Safety Program at NNSA's Albuquerque Operations Office. Unlike the recent electrical test failures for the W87 and B83, this test failure in no way indicates the possibility of a safety problem during disassembly. [II.A]