

# DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 20, 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 July 20, 2001

**DNFSB Activity Summary:** H. Waugh and W. White were on site all week. R. West was on site all week to observe the BWXT W78 readiness assessment. J. Deplitch, D. Nichols, and L. McGrew were on site Monday through Thursday to observe ongoing W79 and W88 operations and to discuss the status of the W62 SS-21 project.

**W78 Contractor Readiness Assessment:** BWXT continued its contractor readiness assessment of the W78 Step 1 Disassembly & Inspection and Repair Process this week with completion of bay operations and the start of cell operations. BWXT's current plan is to complete the review by the end of next week. Demonstrations of W78 operations are currently suspended because a lifting fixture failed its vacuum test (failed check valve). Demonstrations are expected to resume on Monday.

The readiness assessment was started prematurely. The assessment has identified significant problems with procedures, implementation of safety controls, and operator performance. The lack of readiness is not surprising given the premature and very limited technical assist (management self-assessment) conducted prior to the readiness assessment. The technical assist was started without an approved authorization basis, and it was limited to a short five day period. The technical assist concentrated on procedures and found numerous problems. The technical assist did not look at several operations, at the implementation of many controls, or at the status of in-service inspections to verify design features for safety. The report from the technical assist was published the day that the BWXT readiness assessment started. The authorization basis was approved four days prior to starting the readiness assessment with 11 conditions of approval. These were not addressed prior to the start of the contractor readiness assessment. In addition, 26 controls were identified as not implemented in the BWXT safety bases controls database.

Despite the technical assist, procedures continue to have missing steps, incorrect steps, or improper sequencing of steps. In addition to the previously identified lack of implementation of safety controls, there are a significant number of problems with the flow down of controls which were supposed to be implemented. Numerous examples were found of in-service inspections that have not been accomplished. Operators have failed to comply with authorization basis controls associated with combustible material controls, tool control, tester location for safety, and hoist operations. Additionally, operators have not completed the certification process.

New site-wide programs, such as the administrative control program for configuration management of tools, also have significant implementation problems. The tools identified on the facility calibration board (and the inspections listed as required for those tools) do not consistently match the tools in the facility or the tools identified in the tooling lists in W78 procedures. Fire protection controls are not fully implemented, and it is not clear that the path forward for updating the authorization basis to include Fire BIO controls is adequate.

The W78 program was not ready to start the contractor readiness assessment. [II.A]

**No-Notice Emergency Exercise:** On Thursday, NNSA and BWXT conducted a no-notice emergency exercise. The exercise simulated a fire in a hazardous waste treatment facility. The most significant observations include communications issues at the on-scene command post. [II.A]