

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

August 17, 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 August 17, 2001

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

Unreviewed Safety Question Procedure: On Wednesday, NNSA AAO informed BWXT that AAO can not approve the BWXT *Unreviewed Safety Question (USQ) Procedure* (Pantex Standard 3014) as written. BWXT was required to submit the procedure to NNSA for approval under 10 CFR 830. NNSA also noted that the resolution of findings from an AAO USQ assessment is still in process and that resolution of the findings will be linked to approval of the USQ procedure. This assessment was performed in January 2001 as part of DOE's implementation of Recommendation 98-2.

AAO noted several specific areas of concern that must be addressed prior to approval of the procedure. These areas of concern include the following:

- The USQ procedure allows level A and level B prescreens as well as USQ evaluations. Level A prescreens determine whether a change involves only editorial changes or categorical exclusions. Level B prescreens determine whether the change increases a hazard or creates a new hazard. AAO found that BWXT personnel performing level A and B prescreens do not have educational or training requirements commensurate with their responsibilities. AAO expects the level B prescreens to be eliminated. If level A prescreens remain, training improvements are required.
- Categorical exclusions have been written for activities that should remain under the USQ process.
- Primary ownership for implementation of the USQ process has not been transferred completely to the appropriate facility line management or other line organizations per DOE's commitments to the Board under Recommendation 98-2

AAO requested that BWXT provide a revised USQ procedure and an implementation plan for the procedure prior to the end of this fiscal year. [II.A]

Emergency Exercise: NNSA and BWXT hosted an emergency exercise on Thursday. The exercise, "Beyond the Next Day," was a tabletop discussion of questions that might occur during the recovery phase following a hypothetical plant accident. The exercise was well-run and involved over a hundred personnel from multiple local, state, and federal organizations as well as volunteer groups. The exercise was primarily an educational tool to provide a forum for various affected organizations to air concerns and provide input on their expectations for interactions with other agencies during the recovery phase of any operational emergency. [II.A]

NNSA Readiness Assessment for Building 11-55: NNSA held the in-brief for its readiness assessment of the new High Explosives Synthesis Facility (Building 11-55) on Friday. The readiness assessment will evaluate high explosives synthesis operations in the new facility. The in-brief for the readiness assessment was held without an approved implementation plan in place. This plan is expected to be available on Monday. Only about two-thirds of the readiness assessment team members attended the in-brief. Demonstrations of operations are scheduled to begin next week, and the readiness assessment is expected to conclude next Friday. However, on Friday afternoon, the AAO manager indicated the readiness assessment will not be allowed to continue until all requirements have been met. [II.A]