

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 14, 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: W. White, Pantex Site Representative
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending February 14, 2003

DNFSB Activity Summary: D. Nichols, A. Matteucci, and Outside Experts L. McGrew and J. King were on site all week.

W62 Step 2 NESS and RA: The NESS and RA for the W62 SS-21 Step 2 disassembly and inspection process continued this week. Bay operations were demonstrated in the training bay; vacuum chamber and radiography operations were demonstrated in the actual facilities. Cell operations will be demonstrated next week. Although the NESS and RA team members are working effectively together and contractor personnel have been very responsive to the needs of the concurrent reviews, competition for resources has overly complicated the efforts of the RA and NESS teams.

A safety issue that is being discussed by both teams is the M&O contractor's recent redefinition of the training requirements for the production technicians' first line supervisors. The first line supervisors are no longer trained on program-specific procedures, and are not responsible for ensuring that production technicians implement procedures in accordance with program-specific training. DOE O 5480.20A requires that the training for supervisors of personnel who handle nuclear material should be in even more depth than the training of the people they supervise. The training of production section managers at Pantex does not appear sufficient for them to ensure that the safety-related procedures that rely on weapon-specific training for their implementation are being properly executed. This issue is not limited to W62 operations. [II.A]

MoveRight Software Quality Assurance (SQA): On Thursday, the staff participated in a conference call with NNSA/PXSO and BWXT Pantex concerning SQA and problems with the new Move Right System. Move Right is a new computerized system that tracks and authorizes material movement in accordance with Technical Safety Requirements. Within 10 days of declaring the Move Right system operational, an off normal / inadequate procedure violation occurred that involved the unauthorized movement of nuclear material from one zone to another. The project team attributes the unauthorized movement to inadequate training and cumbersome human-factors interfaces. During the critique, compensatory measures were identified. Those measures have now been implemented.

Based on Tech Report 25 and subsequent DOE actions, BWXT Pantex initiated actions designed to improve SQA. Most of the Move Right software was developed before any of the resulting SQA initiatives came to fruition. The Move Right deficiencies may reflect the absence of those initiatives at the time of its development. Corrective actions may be required to ensure the incorporation of newly developed plant requirements.

The inventory control program, of which the Move Right software is a part, is an administrative control with safety-class functions. Failure of this control could have significant offsite consequences. [II.A]