

## **DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD**

**MEMO TO:** J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director

**FROM:** Timothy Hunt and Dave Kupferer, Pantex Site Representatives

**DATE:** Friday, May 20, 2005

**SUBJECT:** Pantex Weekly Report

**W62 Operations:** Last weekend, production technicians, using a supplemental procedure, successfully removed a damaged component from an anomalous unit. Production technicians subsequently resumed further disassembly operations on the subject unit using the operating procedure. While attempting to separate a case from the unit, the main charge high explosive separated at an unexpected point in the procedure. An additional supplemental procedure was used to complete disassembly of the unit.

**W76 Operations:** Due to previously reported issues with a W76 disassembly, BWXT recently initiated W76 operations in a second facility. This week, operations were suspended in the additional facility after production technicians were unable to remove the midcase from the unit after applying the maximum procedurally allowable force.

**Conduct of Operations:** BWXT submitted a comprehensive plan to PXSO that identifies both short-term and long-term planned improvements to procedural compliance and conduct of operations at Pantex. The plan includes the following actions: revisions to first-line supervisor roles and responsibilities, realignment of operational technical support, updating procedures and the Conduct of Operations Manual, and proposed changes to improve critique performance and timeliness. BWXT management is discussing its expectations with first-line supervisors individually, including an emphasis on expectations for responding to off-normal events. First hand observations of some of these discussions indicates value-added.

**Pit Cleaning Readiness Assessment (RA):** PXSO completed its RA of the pit cleaning process designed to support repackaging of pits in AL-R8/SI containers. Pit cleaning is on the critical path for DOE to complete sealed insert repackaging of all DNFSB Recommendation 99-1 pits by October 2005. The PXSO RA team identified numerous pre-start findings, the majority of which are related to radiation protection and the authorization basis. Three months ago, in response to issues with the initial automated guided vehicle contractor RA, PXSO issued a letter to BWXT regarding expectations for readiness review prerequisites. The number of findings during the pit cleaning RA is seemingly another indication that BWXT is doing an inadequate job of preparing for readiness reviews.

**Preliminary Notice of Violation (PNOV):** On Monday, the Department of Energy's Office of Price-Anderson Enforcement notified BWXT that it is proposing a \$123,750 civil penalty after concluding that BWXT had violated parts of 10CFR830 during W56 dismantlement operations last year. The amount of the fine was reduced due to mitigating factors relating to the timeliness of management's response and comprehensive corrective actions.

**Documented Safety Analysis Inadequacy:** A control for the W78 disassembly process requires that all tooling and equipment connected to the facility compressed air system "shall be evaluated to withstand a maximum inlet pressure of 150 psi without resulting in fragmentation." The W78 operation utilizes a cart connected to the facility compressed air system to perform gas sampling on the unit. During development of special tooling support documentation for the cart, it was discovered that the 150 psi qualification was not in place. W78 cart operations have been suspended until this issue is resolved and impacts on other programs (e.g., B83 paint bay) are being evaluated.

**The Week Ahead:** SS-21 B83 NESS deliberations, PXSO weapon testers program review, BWXT/PXSO Board brief on conduct of operations, Paint Bay contractor ORR.