

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

MEMO TO: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: Timothy Hunt and Dave Kupferer, Pantex Site Representatives
DATE: Friday, June 10, 2005
SUBJECT: Pantex Weekly Report

DNFSB Staff Activity: R. T. Davis and J. Malen were on-site to provide Site Rep support, observe operations, and observe the Paint Bay contractor ORR.

BWXT-Pantex Contract Extension: NNSA has announced plans to extend BWXT-Pantex's contract to manage and operate the Pantex Plant through September 2010. BWXT-Pantex was initially awarded the contract in February 2001.

W76 Nuclear Explosive Safety Change Evaluation (NCE): On Thursday, NNSA convened an NCE to evaluate BWXT's proposed path forward to resume operations on the second W76 "sticker" unit (see 5/20/05 Pantex Weekly Report). As part of the proposed path forward, the operating procedure is being revised to include the following changes: using a sylgard pump to aid during separation processes and increasing the procedurally allowable load that can be applied to the unit. The design agency, Los Alamos National Laboratory, has provided weapon response information regarding these changes. The NCE team informally approved the proposed process modifications, and a Justification for Continued Operations is expected to be approved by NNSA later this afternoon. The operation is scheduled to be performed Saturday.

Nuclear Material Transfer : This week, BWXT moved 13 items containing special nuclear material from a nuclear bay to a neighboring nuclear bay. After the material was moved, BWXT personnel discovered that, in the Move Right system, three of the 13 items had been planned to be moved but had not yet been authorized to be dispatched . The facility SNM limits were not exceeded during this event.

Storage Container Certification: The facility structure of the 12-66 warehouse is not credited in the implemented safety basis and associated accident analysis to prevent the release of special nuclear material (SNM). SNM stored in 12-66 in Type-B containers is not included in the facility inventory as material-at-risk because of the protection provided by the container. SNM was being stored in 12-66 in a Type-B for which the certification expired earlier this week. BWXT has categorized this event as a Technical Safety Requirement (TSR) violation. A few years ago, BWXT modified the 12-66 warehouse so that the facility structure could be credited to prevent the release of SNM in the approved, but currently unimplemented, safety basis. This change to the safety basis should take effect upon completion of the TSR integrated implementation plan.

Paint Bay Operational Readiness Review (ORR): This week, BWXT initiated a contractor ORR of B83 Paint Bay operations. The contractor ORR is being conducted in accordance with DOE Order 425.1C, *Startup and Restart of Nuclear Facilities*. The readiness posture to start Paint Bay operations was previously reviewed by BWXT (a readiness verification) and NNSA (a nuclear explosive safety study). NNSA will perform an ORR after the contractor ORR has been completed.