

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

MEMO TO: Timothy J. Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: Timothy Hunt and Rory Rauch, Pantex Site Representatives
DATE: 29 May 2009
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Weekly Report

Fire Alarm Monitoring System: Last weekend, emergency services dispatch (ESD) personnel received numerous alarm signals from the 15-year old CentraScan fire alarm monitoring system, indicating system trouble. The defense-in-depth system was determined to be inoperable as no signals from the affected fire alarm control panels were being received at the ESD console. Although several locations in the material access area were affected, no nuclear or nuclear explosive facilities were impacted by this event since they were recently transferred to another, more reliable monitoring system. All affected areas were immediately put under a security fire patrol. After 48 hours had elapsed without CentraScan coverage, fire watch activities were initiated for the affected unoccupied facilities. All facilities maintained local fire suppression capabilities throughout the event. The system software was repaired and coverage was restored several days later.

High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) Filters: B&W Pantex recently undertook an effort to develop and implement a HEPA filter testing program after determining that current procurement and quality assurance protocols do not meet the requirements of DOE-STD-3020, *Specification for HEPA Filters Used by DOE Contractors*. Pantex presently does not have any filters classified as performing a confinement ventilation function in Hazard Category 1 or 2 nuclear facilities; however, B&W Pantex has identified four facilities in which HEPA filters are necessary for habitability systems or other non-safety related applications where airborne radioactivity must be confined, and for which the requirements of the standard apply. Although Pantex currently does not send any of its HEPA filters through the Filter Test Facility (FTF), plans are to route all newly ordered filters for the four applicable facilities through the FTF prior to receipt on site.

Multi-unit Operations (MUOs): The NNSA nuclear explosive safety (NES) division recently approved the closure of post-start findings from the W78 and W62 NES studies that identified an unanalyzed accident scenario involving MUOs. The closure package submitted by B&W Pantex documented the fact that all programs for which the unanalyzed scenario would be a concern currently have a control in place that limits active nuclear explosive operations to a single unit. The closure package also addressed the co-mingling of different programs in the inspection areas of LINAC bays, which has been identified as a potential NES concern in the past. B&W Pantex relies on strict procedural compliance to ensure that no more than one unit at a time is outside its approved transportation configuration—a configuration that is deemed to protect the weapon during transport in most credible ramp environments—in a LINAC bay. A NES evaluation would be required prior to approval of MUOs for any programs of concern; however, there are currently no plans to implement MUOs for these programs in the foreseeable future.

Specific Administrative Controls (SACs): A definitive list of SACs is not currently available because B&W Pantex is in the process of binning its administrative controls (ACs) to comply with the guidance in DOE Standard 1186, *Specific Administrative Controls*. This effort should be mostly complete by the end of the fiscal year. However, as an interim measure to aid in the categorization of any events involving ACs in the coming months, B&W Pantex will generate a record list of SACs using the simplified criterion that an AC is a SAC if it is given specific numerical credit in the documented safety analysis.