

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

MEMO TO: Timothy Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: Matthew Duncan and Rory Rauch, Pantex Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Report for Week Ending February 17, 2012

DNFSB Staff Activity: T. Hunt and D. Boyd were on site to perform a conduct of operations review. The focus of the review was procedure adherence, procedure development, and procedure change control; however, the staff also evaluated B&W's processes for managing operator aids, identifying and disseminating required reading, and performing turnover of responsibilities.

Abnormal Stronglink Position: Last week, during a nuclear explosive disassembly operation, an electrical test showed that a stronglink was not in its reset position, as required by an initial condition in the applicable hazard analysis report. This issue has occurred previously (see 6/17/11 report). Similar to previous occurrences, program personnel believe technicians may have inadvertently indexed the stronglink during a sequence of steps that requires the manual manipulation of parts that interface with the stronglink. When this has occurred previously, the stronglink was far from a position that would compromise its safety function. It should also be noted that the technicians electrically tested the stronglink earlier in the process and the stronglink was found to be in the reset position.

This unit was originally scheduled for partial disassembly. B&W is now awaiting formal instruction from the responsible design agency on how to process the remainder of the unit. Once this instruction is obtained, B&W nuclear explosive safety (NES) personnel will decide whether to request a NES evaluation of the recovery operation on this unit. Further complicating the path forward on this unit is the fact that the in-service inspection requirement for the hoist in the facility is due February 18 and cannot be completed with the unit in its current configuration. Technicians will likely need to use the hoist during the recovery operation; therefore, B&W will have to develop a justification for continued operations to address the risk associated with its use.

Transportation Operations: The Pantex technical safety requirements contain a specific administrative control (SAC) that requires drivers of vehicles on plant roads to pull off to the side of the road and stop when a convoy with an escort approaches. The vehicle must remain stopped until the convoy has passed. Last week, a security police officer (SPO) failed to fully comply with the SAC. This is the second occurrence of this issue in two months (see 12/23/11 report). In this instance, the SPO pulled off to the side of the road as a convoy approached, but began to reposition the vehicle farther from the road as the convoy passed. The driver of the rear vehicle in the convoy observed the repositioning of the SPO's vehicle and communicated this to the convoy manager. Since this SAC is covered by Generic limiting condition of operation (LCO) 3.0.7, the shift commander (who had been informed of the issue by the convoy manager), contacted the operations center and entered the LCO in accordance with its action statements. The shift commander exited the LCO upon completion of the material move. Security division management has since conducted refresher training on this SAC to all SPOs.