

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

MEMO TO: Timothy Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: Tom Spatz, Pantex Site Representative
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Report for Week Ending August 17, 2012

Fire Barrier Penetration Seals: This week, B&W Pantex suspended operations in several facilities due to safety basis issues related to suspect fire barrier penetration seals. As reported last week, B&W Pantex has identified suspect fire barrier penetration seals with the inner interlock walls which affected start-up activities for the W87 Limited Life Component Exchange operations. (See weekly reports for 8/10/12 and 11/4/11.) This week the NNSA Production Office (NPO) noted that the safety basis defines the inner interlock walls as 2-hour fire barriers and that the deficiency with the penetration seals applies to all facilities with suspect seals, and not just this one start-up operation. B&W issued a new Potential Inadequacy in the Safety Analysis (PISA) which resulted in a positive Unreviewed Safety Question (USQ) determination. B&W Pantex suspended operations in the affected facilities once the positive USQ was issued Tuesday evening. B&W Pantex submitted an Evaluation of the Safety of the Situation (ESS) on Thursday. The ESS identifies the increased risk, caused by the suspect seals, of fire propagating to a thermally sensitive component due to failure of the fire suppression system. NPO has not approved the ESS, and has asked B&W Pantex to implement additional controls. B&W Pantex has reduced the combustible material in the interlock areas, and is assessing their options for additional controls.

Unit Without Product Definition: B&W Pantex held an event critique this week for a unit that arrived at Pantex from the military in a configuration that was not in the Manufacturing Resource Planning (MRP) system. After accepting the unit, B&W Pantex discovered that no product definition exists at Pantex for this configuration. The military performed a Limited Life Component Exchange on this unit shortly before it was sent to Pantex for disassembly and inspection. The configuration associated with this component exchange does not exist at Pantex. B&W Pantex has been in communication with the Design Agency to determine what design drawings and product definition are required to allow Pantex to process this unit. B&W Pantex management identified two concerns at the critique. The first is that every unit in the stockpile should have a product definition at Pantex. This concern is a Nuclear Weapons Enterprise wide concern. The second concern is that B&W Pantex had no formal procedures in place to address this event. B&W Pantex management noted that there was almost two weeks between the time this unit was found not to be in the MRP system and the time the Operations Center was notified. Discussions with the Design Agency are ongoing. The unit was placed in a restricted status to prevent inter/intra zone movement of the unit.

Nuclear Explosive Safety (NES) Change Control: This week, B&W Pantex held a critique of a NES change control issue that surfaced during an ongoing Operational Safety Review (OSR). The OSR noted that fire extinguishers in the ramps were being removed without NES review of the change. The Fire Department determined that they could reduce costs by limiting the spacing of fire extinguishers to that specified in NFPA-10. B&W Pantex determined this change resulted in a negative USQ determination, however NES was not notified of the change. The fire extinguishers were returned pending a NES evaluation.