

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 13, 2014

MEMO TO: Steven Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: Thomas Spatz, Pantex Site Representative
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Report for Week Ending June 13, 2014

DNFSB Staff on Site: T. Dwyer was at the Pantex Plant this week to observe the NA-12 Senior Management Team meeting.

Procedure Adherence Event: Babcock & Wilcox Technical Services Pantex, LLC (B&W) held an event critique this week for a procedure adherence event associated with the un-packaging of high explosive components. While performing process walkdowns in a training facility to support Design Agency weapon response questions, the Production Technicians (PTs) mentioned that the procedure did not exactly match what's been done in the nuclear explosive operating facility regarding the un-packaging of a high explosive component. The nuclear explosive operating procedure (NEOP) instructs the PTs to remove two high explosive components from one Army-Navy (AN) can. The PTs mentioned that the last two times high explosive components were delivered to the facility one of the components was delivered in an AN "suitcase". There is no special nuclear material collocated in the facility while high explosives are being unpackaged. B&W Authorization Basis personnel at the critique stated that the AN suitcase is not analyzed for use in the nuclear explosive operating facility and not mentioned in the NEOP. Although the Explosives Technology procedures allowed the explosive component to be packaged and transported on site in the AN suitcase; this resulted in different configuration to be delivered to the nuclear explosives operating facility than the one contained in the NEOP. This event did not result in a violation of any Technical Safety Requirements. B&W has categorized this event as a violation or noncompliance of a hazard control specified in an approved safety basis of a nuclear facility. B&W Authorization Basis personnel have entered this event into their new information process.

New Vacuum Chamber Facility: The Site Representative walked down the facility undergoing modification to become the new vacuum chamber facility. The facility was originally designed as a vacuum chamber facility in the 1990's, however B&W never developed a 10CFR830 compliant safety basis or commissioned the facility for war reserve use. The existing facility has three large vacuum chambers, vacuum pumps and hardware, and vacuum and backfill gas manifold instrumentation and controls. B&W plans to excess all of this hardware and tear down several non-fire rated walls, make improvements to the deluge fire protection system, and perform electrical upgrades. B&W tooling engineers are designing new vacuum chamber systems, transfer carts, isolation stands, and adapters for the new modular design. The current scope is to develop vacuum chamber systems for two weapon programs. B&W has not started construction to demolition the existing walls.