

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

September 12, 2014

MEMO TO: Steven Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: Thomas Spatz, Pantex Site Representative
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Report for Week Ending September 12, 2014

Technical Safety Requirement (TSR) Violation During Planned Maintenance: Consolidated Nuclear Security, LLC (CNS) declared a TSR violation when personnel failed to enter two facilities into the appropriate Limiting Conditions for Operation (LCO) prior to performing quarterly preventive maintenance on the deluge fire suppression system. The CNS facility representative approved and signed the maintenance work authorization on Thursday, for work to be performed on Saturday. This is a common practice at Pantex. The facility representative signature indicates that the work authorization contains all pertinent information, and gives a date and time for the work to be performed. In this event, on Saturday there was a last minute change in the on-duty facility representative due to personal reasons. The special mechanical inspection personnel picked up the signed work authorization from an unoccupied facility representative office and began work at 08:00 in accordance with the work authorization. The special mechanical inspection personnel called the operations center and instructed them to ignore the fire alarms in the affected facilities, but did not instruct them to change the facility mode to maintenance or to enter the LCO. This resulted in a TSR violation where the deluge fire suppression system was disabled in an operational nuclear explosive facility. When the on-duty facility representative heard the fire alarm in the ramp, he informed the special mechanical inspection personnel that the LCO had not been entered and then made the appropriate notifications. CNS has paused the practice of pre-approving work authorizations until after the causal analysis/mistake proofing meeting can determine the appropriate corrective actions.

Conduct of Operations: CNS held an event critique this week for an event that initially happened in April 2014, but was discovered this week. For one weapon system, the radiography department uses a generic procedure for all approved radiographic operations. For each specific weapon, the radiography engineer customizes the procedure by lining-out the portions that are not required, then the rest are performed. In this event, the radiography engineer used the lined-out procedure for a disassembly and inspection operation when the engineer should have used the lined-out procedure for an assembly operation. The unit was radiographed according to the line-out procedure and quality personnel bought the unit. This week, the radiography engineer reviewing the data noticed that the unit did not receive all the radiographs required for a unit to be sent to the military, and that the wrong portion of the procedure had been performed on the unit. CNS put a hold on the unit. CNS is contacting the Design Agency for permission to perform the correct radiographs and is preparing a nuclear explosive engineering procedure to perform the radiographs. All the radiographs on the generic procedure are approved from a safety perspective; however the event will result in unnecessary work, handling, and transportation to a nuclear explosive.

Extension of Justification for Continued Operations (JCO) for Sylgard™ Pump

Operations: CNS requested, and the NNSA Production Office (NPO) approved an extension of the JCO to continue operations with the Sylgard™ pump for an additional 120 days. (See report for 5/23/2014.) NPO approved the extension based on the proposal by CNS to increase the test frequency of the facility air gage, which was a one-time initial test in the original JCO. CNS continues to develop a new pump with an integrated pressure relief valve.