

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

September 26, 2014

MEMO TO: Steven Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: Thomas Spatz, Pantex Site Representative
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Report for Week Ending September 26, 2014

Pause of Hoisting Operations: Production Technicians (PTs) were hoisting an instrumented Joint Test Assembly (JTA) when they heard one of the air hoses connecting the pendant to the hoist disengage. The hoist stopped responding with the JTA suspended approximately three feet above the ground. The PTs immediately turned off the air supply to the hoist and contacted the production section manager, who in turn made the appropriate notifications. The fixture in the work stand was moved as high as allowed by procedure underneath the JTA to establish the safe and stable configuration. The facility representative submitted a work order to have the hoist pendant replaced, and maintenance personnel replaced the pendant. Consolidated Nuclear Security, LLC (CNS) paused all hoist operations until every hoist could be evaluated by system engineering personnel. CNS discovered that the rope used to suspend the hoist pendant was longer than the air hoses, resulting in the weight of the pendant being supported by air hoses. In this incident, the tension in the air hoses resulted in one of them disconnecting at the hoist. CNS has completed the facility walkdowns and found fifteen other hoists where the rope may be too long resulting in tension on the air hoses.

Justification for Continued Operations (JCO) for Weighing Operations in Mass Properties Facilities: The NNSA Production Office (NPO) issued a Safety Evaluation Report (SER) approving the JCO to resume weighing operations in the mass properties facilities with no conditions of approval or technical review comments. (See report for 9/19/2014.) The JCO contains a compensatory measure to fasten the scale fixture already fixed to the unit to the scale using existing mounting holes. NPO stated that the JCO will expire in six months from the effective date. CNS has resumed weighing operations.

Justification for Continued Operations (JCO) for Electro-Static Discharge (ESD) Scenario: CNS sent two JCOs to NPO to resume operations on the two weapon programs that were paused due to ESD concerns while the PTs are kneeling. (See report for 9/5/2014.) The JCOs incorporate a new Specific Administrative Control (SAC) that requires procedures and training to be in place requiring the PTs to bond by wrist strap to the work stand during operations where the PT may be kneeling. This new SAC affected eight nuclear explosive operating procedures on one weapon program and two on the other. In one JCO, CNS identified several steps in the operating procedure where the unit could be raised high enough in the work stand to preclude the need for a PT to kneel. CNS has made those procedure changes. At the time of this report, NPO had issued a Safety Evaluation Report (SER) for one of the JCOs with no conditions of approval or technical review comments. NPO stated that the JCO will expire in 180 days from the effective date. NPO further directed CNS to conduct a study to evaluate if the kneeling man actually exceeds the 100-volt environment when kneeling.

Material Move Event: CNS used the Integrated Program Planning and Execution System to plan and conduct the move of five items from a high explosives staging facility to a machining facility. Following the move, it was discovered that one of the items had a different serial number than what was authorized to be moved. There were no safety consequences from the move and the component was returned to the staging facility.