

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

August 29, 2025

TO: Technical Director
FROM: Pantex Plant Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending August 29, 2025

Federal Readiness Assessment: Last month, the PXD contractor readiness assessment (CRA) team concluded its review of new nuclear explosive operations, on a certain weapon program (see 5/30/2025 and 7/4/2025 reports). The CRA team identified three pre-start findings, which require the development of corrective actions.

Last week, PFO held an in-brief for the commencement of the federal readiness assessment (FRA). The scope of the FRA includes engineering conduct, contractor readiness, operations conduct, radiation safety, worker safety, safety basis, and startup for these new nuclear explosive operations. This week, PFO commenced observations of operational demonstrations with a trainer unit, which will continue into the following weeks and include an emergency drill.

Conduct of Maintenance: Last week, while performing a management self-assessment, the PXD infrastructure assessment team identified that a Level III work package was used to perform corrective maintenance last year on a forklift with damaged electrical wiring, which is designated as a safety class design feature within the safety basis. As such, a Level III work package is inappropriate per Pantex procedures for safety class equipment because it is less rigorous and does not require necessary reviews and approvals. Per discussions during the event fact finding, the PXD maintenance work planner appropriately followed Pantex processes and verified whether the forklift was listed in a configuration management program document; if listed, such equipment maintenance activities would then require either a Level I or II work package. However, as later described by fact-finding participants, Pantex personnel had previously labeled the forklift with a legacy equipment number, which is not listed in the configuration management program document. Consequently, when the PXD work planner used this legacy number to search in the configuration management document, the individual could not locate the forklift and therefore concluded a Level III work package was sufficient. Additionally, PXD personnel noted that no guidance had been provided to the work planner on how to cross reference these legacy numbers with the current equipment numbers used in the configuration management program document.

PXD categorized this event as a noncompliance with a credited hazard control specified within the safety basis. Additionally, in response to this discovery, the PXD infrastructure senior manager paused all Level III corrective maintenance work orders on forklifts. Furthermore, PXD conducted an extent of condition review and identified a small subset of forklift work packages that similarly did not meet the level of rigor per Pantex requirements. For these forklifts, PXD plans to develop a model work order to resolve the noncompliance, as well as conduct operability determinations, to return the forklifts back to service. PXD also plans to conduct a causal analysis to develop corrective actions to prevent recurrence, such as labeling the forklifts with the correct equipment number, which was discussed during the fact finding, but deferred for further discussion during the causal analysis. In the interim, PXD will require supervisor approval for all Level III work orders.