

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 13, 2026

TO: Technical Director
FROM: Pantex Plant Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending February 13, 2026

Staff Activity: This week, members of the DNFSB headquarters staff conducted a teleconference with personnel from PXD and PFO for follow-up questions concerning an ongoing review of the PXD fire protection inspection, testing, and maintenance program (see 9/12/2025 report). Additionally, DNFSB headquarters staff conducted a separate teleconference with contractor and federal personnel from Sandia National Laboratories to better understand roles and responsibilities for electrical test equipment used on nuclear explosives at Pantex.

Facility Appurtenances: In March 2023, the field office at Pantex approved a safety basis change package that removed the requirement for appurtenances in special nuclear material facilities to remain in place following design basis seismic events. However, in the associated safety evaluation report, the field office noted an “expectation” that the contractor would continue seismically qualifying these appurtenances as part of a planned improvement project. Recently, PXD transmitted a memo requesting to modify their seismic design and analysis approach by aligning the level of engineering effort to match safety basis requirements. The memo did not provide further detail on this modified strategy. PFO concurred on this approach, stating that the “approach follows National Nuclear Security Administration initiatives by identifying efficiencies while ensuring requirements are met.” Prior to receiving this approval, PXD submitted another request to discontinue performing additional seismic qualification walkdowns of, and resulting upgrades to, appurtenances within special nuclear material facilities, as well as nuclear explosive bay interlocks, nuclear explosive cell interlocks, and nuclear explosive cell corridors. Currently, PFO is still reviewing this subsequent request.

Emergency Drill: This week, a resident inspector attended an emergency drill consisting of a simulated onsite fire of a facility that houses hazardous material and an associated personnel casualty. PXD and PFO participants conducted themselves in a manner that was suitable for the scenario and were self-critical during the post-drill discussions concerning their performance.

Safety Basis: This week, PXD safety analysis engineering (SAE) personnel discovered that the safety basis for a certain weapon program was not consistent with information from the associated design agency. Specifically, SAE personnel identified that two configurations of this program were captured differently between the weapon response documentation provided by the design agency and the safety basis and procedures developed by Pantex. As a result, SAE personnel declared a potential inadequacy of the safety analysis (PISA) since these two nuclear explosive configurations may not be properly analyzed within the safety basis and all hazards appropriately assessed. While PXD recorded in the PISA documentation that this issue indicates that a new hazard control may be needed, SAE personnel stated that the currently assessed hazards may be bounding and the discrepancy may result in only changes to the weapon response documentation. Out of precaution, PXD established operational restrictions that include prohibiting operations that involve these weapon configurations until SAE can work with the design agency to evaluate the safety analysis and implement a path forward.