

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 27, 2026

TO: Technical Director
FROM: Pantex Plant Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending March 27, 2026

Staff Activity: DNFSB staff members were onsite to provide resident inspector augmentation, receive updates on recent issues, and attend briefings for a nuclear explosive safety master study. Additionally, the DNFSB staff held a teleconference with PFO and PXD management as part of a review concerning the recent exemption from all requirements within Subpart B, *Safety Basis Requirements*, of Title 10, Code of Federal Regulations Part 830, *Nuclear Safety Management* (10 CFR 830 Subpart B), for the Material Staging Capability project at Pantex.

Exemption Request: This week, PFO received a memo from the NNSA Cognizant Secretarial Officer for Safety that approved a recent request for an exemption (see 3/13/2026 report). NNSA exempted all existing Pantex facilities within a material access area used for staging and transportation of nuclear explosives and special nuclear material from all requirements within 10 CFR 830 Subpart B. The resident inspectors asked PFO and PXD management how this exemption will change how they document and control hazards for the staging and “non-intrusive” activities performed in this material access area. The resident inspectors also questioned the intended scope of these “non-intrusive” activities. PFO and PXD are still evaluating how this exemption will be implemented. NNSA has recently followed this process to exempt the Material Staging Capability project from requirements of 10 CFR 830 Subpart B (see 11/21/2025 and 2/27/2026 reports). Additionally, PFO has endorsed another request from PXD to exempt existing defense nuclear facilities from certain requirements in DOE Order 420.1C, *Facility Safety* (see 3/20/2026 report).

Onsite Vehicle Accident: Last week, while driving to an assigned work area, a PXD security police officer momentarily lost consciousness and hit a concrete beam support. PXD emergency services transported the individual to a local hospital for further evaluation. While this accident did not occur near defense nuclear facilities, the resident inspectors note that current Pantex safety basis documents deem the impact of these facilities from certain vehicles as not a credible hazard (see 8/2/2024 report). These vehicles are binned in various classes that could exceed the existing impact analyses of defense nuclear facilities at low speeds. The Pantex Sitewide Safety Analysis Report contains an assumption that these vehicles do not pose a credible impact hazard. PXD asserts that if the driver temporarily loses control of the vehicle, they will have sufficient time to regain control prior to impacting a facility. Furthermore, PXD does not currently analyze medical events as hazard scenario initiators. The resident inspectors continue to question this approach given that this accident involved a driver who lost consciousness.

Electrical Receptacle Fire: Earlier this month, PXD convened fact-finding meetings concerning an electrical outlet that had ignited in a material access area (see 3/6/2026 report). During these meetings, PXD personnel conveyed that an extension cord had been plugged into a shop-made electrical cord. PXD sent out a safety bulletin to site personnel noting this as an unacceptable practice and briefed PXD infrastructure personnel on the event. PXD also plans to walk down all charging stations to remove any shop-made electrical cords.