

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 8, 2026

Pantex Plant Resident Inspectors Activity Report for Week Ending May 8, 2026

Emergency Drill: This week, PXD conducted an emergency drill involving a simulated offsite hazardous material release that affected onsite facilities. Specific topics evaluated by a resident inspector included (1) communications between Pantex organizations, (2) activation and stand-up of the emergency response organization, and (3) onsite response to the event.

Conduct of Operations: Last week, PXD quality assurance technicians (QAT) within a special purpose facility used an assembly procedure—rather than the appropriate disassembly procedure—when performing nuclear explosive operations. In this unique case, PXD planned to partially disassemble a unit before performing assembly operations, with QATs conducting nondestructive evaluation activities for each set of operations. Therefore, PXD provided both operating procedures to the QATs at the same time. Upon discovery of the procedural noncompliance, PXD paused operations and entered this unit into the nonconformance process. After further evaluation, PXD noted that both assembly and disassembly procedures contained very similar operations, allowing the nonconformance to be lifted and operations to resume.

At the fact-finding meeting for this event, PXD personnel identified that the QATs should have verified which procedure was applicable by using site-specific computer software. Furthermore, PXD personnel acknowledged that the production section manager had also incorrectly informed the technicians to use the assembly procedure prior to starting work that shift. As a result, PXD plans to brief the production section managers on improved turnover messaging, as well as brief the QATs on proper verification of procedures prior to commencing operations.

The resident inspectors note that PXD implemented a barcode reader for nuclear explosive operating procedures, which provides an indicator that technicians are using the correct document. However, in this unique instance, the barcode reader indicates that either procedure is acceptable. When questioned by the resident inspectors, PXD personnel stated that potential improvements to the barcode reader should be considered during the upcoming causal analysis.

Maintenance on Safety-Class Equipment: This week, PXD conducted fact-finding meetings after discovering maintenance had been performed on safety-class onsite transportation vehicles without appropriate detail within associated work packages since 2022. Since these vehicles are designated as safety class, according to site requirements, PXD should have delineated specific steps in the work packages for the craft workers to perform. However, PXD only provided a simple scope of work statement for the equipment maintenance that was expected to be within the skill of the craft workers, without any additional detail. After discovering this issue, PXD evaluated the completed work orders and determined that the maintenance performed on this equipment did not affect any safety-class features and therefore was not a violation of the applicable technical safety requirement. As a result of the fact-finding meetings, PXD plans to revise the process for performing this vehicle maintenance—creating a new work model that categorizes future work packages involving these vehicles at the appropriate level—and communicate these changes to all applicable personnel.