

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 23, 2020

TO: Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director
FROM: Miranda McCoy, Resident Inspector
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending October 23, 2020

COVID-19 Pandemic: Given increases in COVID-19 cases in the Amarillo area and among Pantex employees, CNS reactivated a limited emergency response organization (ERO) to meet daily to monitor information related to COVID-19, provide direction to CNS management, and respond to any emergency events as required. The limited ERO was previously convened in April to provide COVID-19-related support, and was transitioned to a recovery team that met on a weekly basis as CNS progressed through their COVID-19 recovery plan (see 4/10/20 report). Additionally, CNS updated the standing order—originally issued in May—that establishes sitewide COVID-19 controls (see 5/15/20 report). The new revision to the standing order maintains sitewide mask requirements, but includes updated information on temperature self-monitoring requirements, among other topics.

Immediate Action Procedures: Production technicians (PT) and their first line supervisor entered immediate action procedures following an unexpected reading during an electrical test of one unit. While performing the electrical test, PTs received an input error from the tester. PTs disconnected the tester from the unit, paused operations, placed the unit in a safe and stable configuration, and exited the facility. The production section manager notified the operations center and plant shift superintendent, and notified appropriate CNS groups, including tester design and nuclear explosive safety personnel. Based on the error message, tester design personnel were able to conclude that the likely cause of the failed test was an issue with the tester cable itself. Tester design personnel were able to quickly verify this conclusion upon re-entering the facility. CNS personnel received written release from nuclear explosive safety personnel and exited the immediate action procedure. No other units were present in the facility during the failed test or subsequent immediate action procedure activities. Pantex received a draft special instruction engineering release from the applicable design agency for safely proceeding with operations. CNS process engineering personnel are working to write a nuclear explosive engineering procedure to allow PTs to proceed, including repeating the failed electrical test.

35-Account Material: CNS personnel continued their evaluation of 35-account gloves and other materials for electrostatic dissipative (ESD) properties (see 10/9/20 report). While continuing the extent of condition review, CNS determined that a lot of electrically conductive bags had not been properly ESD tested. The bags were associated with two 35-Account Material numbers. Bags with these material numbers were removed from operational areas while testing could be performed. As of this time, all lots of affected 35-account gloves have been evaluated for ESD properties and either routed for disposal or permitted for use.

Fire Detection System: CNS Performance Excellence personnel completed a tracking and trending evaluation of Det-Tronics related Occurrence Reporting and Processing System (ORPS) entries over the past two years. The evaluation showed that approximately one-third of the September Pantex ORPS reports were related to Det-Tronics failures. CNS is currently working to troubleshoot the cause of the faults (see 10/16/20 report).