

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 5, 2021

TO: Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director
FROM: Miranda McCoy, Resident Inspector
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending February 5, 2021

Safety Basis: NPO approved documented safety analysis change packages related to surveillance requirements for Pantex fire suppression systems. The surveillance requirement changes implement part of the technical safety requirement (TSR) improvement plan, and include operability acceptance criteria and performance criteria for fire suppression systems. NPO did not document any conditions of approval or directed changes.

High Explosive Moves: Hazardous material transporters drove high explosives in nearly a full loop around Zone 12 south without obtaining a high explosive transportation window. The hazardous material transporters reached their typical northernmost location within Zone 12, but encountered an inoperable roll-up door. Following discussions with Pantex security personnel, the transporters believed they had authorization to drive around Zone 12 to an additional roll-up door location. However, they did not obtain a high explosive transportation window to support the activity. Pantex's TSRs specify that certain explosives may be transported in the protected area provided no nuclear explosives or specific nuclear materials are concurrently being transported within the material access area. CNS personnel performed onsite transportation of these materials that same day; however, they did not perform these onsite transportation operations during the same time interval as the high explosive move. The resident inspector notes that while the TSR control—i.e., the use of a high explosive transportation window—failed to be implemented, the TSR was worded such that the event did not meet the definition of a TSR violation. Pantex has experienced roll-up door failures with some regularity, with inoperable roll-up doors in an open configuration notably resulting in a burst water pipe and an event with the potential to affect onsite transportation activities last year (see 8/28/20 and 2/7/20 reports).

Conduct of Operations: Explosive technicians performed operations with a torque wrench not identified in their procedure. The error indicates both a conduct of operations issue and an oversight with the procedure not identifying all necessary equipment. Explosive technicians have recently incurred similar conduct of operations issues (see 1/29/21 report).

35-Account Containers: This week, CNS discovered that a number of 35-account shipping containers did not meet their pre-shipping inspection requirements. CNS quality personnel accepted the shipping container measurement plan in 2011, and warehouse personnel provided the containers to general stores last year. Early this year, CNS technicians noted damage to several of the shipping containers. Engineers evaluated the damage and determined that the shipping containers were still fit for use, but did not document the damage or decision. Technicians continued operations, filling and processing 25 containers. The containers were then transported to a different location onsite, where they were inspected for leaks. The containers were determined to be leaking and dented at that time. CNS personnel attached do-not-use tags to all copies of the shipping container and convened an event investigation. CNS has identified previous issues with 35-account storage and testing, and NPO is currently conducting an assessment of the 35-account program (see 1/22/21 and 10/23/20 reports).