

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

MEMO TO: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: Timothy Hunt and Dave Kupferer, Pantex Site Representatives
DATE: 12 January 2006
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Weekly Report

Lockout/Tagout (LO/TO): Last Thursday evening, in a Zone 11 facility, maintenance personnel from BWXT and another PXSO contractor (Noresco) de-energized and applied LO/TOs to an electrical circuit prior to Noresco replacing several lighting fixtures. Later that evening, BWXT maintenance personnel discovered that Noresco had replaced a fixture that was connected to an electrical circuit that had not been within the scope of the LO/TO. The subject light was on an energized circuit and could have been powered on by a standard light switch. A separate, but very similar, incident occurred in Zone 11 four days later. On Monday night, BWXT maintenance personnel discovered that Noresco was replacing a lighting fixture that was connected to an electrical circuit that BWXT had de-energized and applied a BWXT LO/TO to, but Noresco had not applied its LO/TO to the circuit as required by Pantex procedures. The Noresco employee performing the work believed that the fixture was connected to an electrical circuit to which Noresco had applied a LO/TO.

During both incidents, it appears that the boundaries of the electrical circuits to which the LO/TOs were applied were miscommunicated by Noresco. One cause of the miscommunication was that no drawings were provided to Noresco that could have been used to help articulate and document the boundaries of the electrical circuits. PXSO has directed Noresco to suspend all work that requires a LO/TO to be applied to a hazardous energy source. BWXT has initiated a root cause investigation of these two incidents.

W88 Cell Operations: Work resumed this week on the first unit being processed to support a significant finding investigation. Operations were suspended a month ago following the discovery of unexpected material fracturing. Corrective actions were established and the process was completed without further incident. BWXT issued a work suspension applicable to the other two W88 units pending completion of a process reevaluation.

Condensate in Electrical Equipment: Water was discovered last week in the main 480 volt switchgear cabinet, manual transfer switchbox and connecting conduit that service a special nuclear material storage facility. Operations personnel immediately powered down the equipment in a controlled manner and determined that warm, moist air was flowing through the electrical conduit and condensing in cooler components. Upon buildup of condensate in the conduit, it then flowed back into the main switchgear. No equipment damage was found. The affected conduit was dried out and the internal ends were sealed to preclude air flow.

BWXT Briefings on Anonymous Safety Letter: BWXT senior management recently began briefing all site personnel on the results of its investigation into the facts surrounding the 7 November 2006 anonymous letter. The investigative team concluded that the letter was useful and that there were a few areas identified in which BWXT can improve. BWXT management also concluded that many claims made by the authors of the letter could not be substantiated and they strongly disagree with the overall assertion of the letter that Pantex is not a safe place to work. Representatives from Honeywell, Bechtel National and BWX Technologies were at Pantex this week performing an independent corporate investigation into the matter.