

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

**MEMO TO:** J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director  
**FROM:** Timothy Hunt and Dave Kupferer, Pantex Site Representatives  
**DATE:** Friday, July 8, 2005  
**SUBJECT:** Pantex Plant Weekly Report

**Tooling:** From 14 March to 1 April of this year, BWXT conducted an independent assessment of the Pantex tooling program to evaluate the effectiveness of the changes that were made to the program after the NNSA assessment in November 2004 was suspended. PXSO staff shadowed the BWXT independent assessment. This week, PXSO issued a report that indicated the BWXT Independent Assessment Team conducted a thorough review, but that PXSO had additional specific concerns regarding the following four areas of the tooling program: management, procedures, training and level of knowledge, and manning/resources. PXSO also noted significant improvement in all elements of the Pantex tooling program over the past several months. PXSO expects that BWXT will address the aforementioned concerns in addition to providing PXSO with a formal Declaration of Readiness prior to resumption of the NNSA assessment, which is currently planned for September 2005.

**Readiness Activities Causal Analysis:** In a May 2005 letter to BWXT, PXSO expressed concern that readiness assessments and readiness verifications have generally recorded an excessive number of findings. At PXSO's request, BWXT has performed a root cause analysis of the problem and identified the following issues: the project teams do not understand the requirements for startup projects; the training and qualification for project teams is less than adequate; multiple projects compete for the same resources; and the authorization basis is very dynamic, which causes conflicts between flow down and implementing procedures.

**Procedure Violation:** This week, protective blankets used during nuclear explosive transport were not positioned on a unit per the technical procedure. The method of installation of this credited tooling did not result in any direct safety issues as sensitive areas were covered, but failure to follow the procedure is a potential safety concern. The operating procedure, which failed to reference the technical procedure, warrants revising and production technicians should be trained on proper installation. In addition, the Quality Level-1 (QL-1) manufacturer of the protective blankets did not fabricate several copies of one blanket model per the design drawing. There was no requirement for BWXT to inspect the blankets upon receipt, but this process is being reconsidered.

**Nuclear Explosive Safety (NES) Master Studies:** NNSA has approved the NES Master Study that analyzed Paint Bay operations at Pantex. The Assistant Deputy Administrator for Military Application and Stockpile Operations (NA-12) has agreed with the NES study group that there is a need for a NES Master Study of the plant-wide Tooling Control Program and that three other Master Studies should be reperformed. Therefore, NA-12 has requested that PXSO and the Albuquerque Service Center develop a plan of corrective actions and implementation schedule to resolve these issues. In addition, NA-12 has asserted the need for NES revalidation of procedures after the NNSA and BWXT Operational Readiness Reviews are performed since it is possible that the procedures and associated controls will change as a result of these ORRs.

**BWXT Open Findings Tracking:** In December 2004, PXSO requested that BWXT develop and maintain an auditable database to be used for tracking the closure status of conditions of approval and pre- and post-start findings from readiness assessments and Nuclear Explosive Safety Studies. BWXT has completed this task.