

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

MEMO TO: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: Timothy Hunt and Dave Kupferer, Pantex Site Representatives
DATE: 14 July 2006
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Weekly Report

Incorrect Procedure: Production technicians removing a sensitive component used the incorrect contingency procedure (NEEP) after the normal process failed. The NEEP used was specific to a unit that had previously been disassembled but the procedure had not been archived. The incorrect and correct NEEPs had largely the same information and techniques and the process was safely completed. NEEPs typically expire six months after issuance regardless of when it is no longer needed. Also, the normal operating procedure (NEOP) does not reference the NEEP to be used if the NEOP can not be successfully executed.

Technical Safety Requirement (TSR) Violation: BWXT declared a TSR violation this week when it was determined that work was performed outside of the safety basis. Greater than residual amounts of high explosives (HE) had been found on a pit in a non-nuclear explosive facility. A Justification for Continued Operation (JCO) was written after a similar incident last year, but it only applied to pits that were already in storage as of last September. The dismantlement procedure that generated the subject pit was also enhanced last year in an attempt to minimize the possibility of sending a pit with greater than residual HE to the cleaning and storage facility. There is still one anomalous pit being tracked per the JCO

W80 Restart: This week, PXS0 sent a memorandum to NA-12 that summarizes the options for restarting W80 disassembly and inspection operations and to complete contracted surveillance units in fiscal year (FY) 2007. PXS0 believes that the primary disadvantage of the options is the lack of a formal hazards analysis and corresponding controls and noted that electrostatic discharge hazards are an example of the type of hazard that may not be adequately evaluated without a formal analysis. PXS0 also questioned whether the estimated cost (\$3.6M) and subsequent SS-21 implementation delays (six to ten months) of restarting the pre-SS-21 process were justifiable. PXS0 recommended that NNSA not pursue exemptions to nuclear safety requirements for the W80 program unless there is a compelling safety or reliability issue. Additionally, it appears that the \$9.5M FY07 funding for W80 life extension program work will be canceled and the funds reallocated to another site to support reliable replacement warhead work.

Static Dissipative Gloves: A batch of static dissipative gloves was inadvertently released to the line without 100 percent testing as required by a TSR control. The TSR requirement was not flowed down into the procurement documents so the critical property of the gloves was only tested on a representative sampling from the lot. The untested gloves were never used on the critical step requiring the TSR control.

W87 Program: Pantex completed the first production unit on the W87 disassembly and inspection using the SS-21 process.

Building 12-64: The project to upgrade the production bays in Building 12-64 was formally cancelled recently. BWXT was directed to prepare a change proposal defining the project closure process. Authorization for multi-unit operations and transferral of training and staging operations from nuclear explosive facilities has reduced the need for the additional bays.