

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 25, 2001

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director  
**FROM:** H. Waugh and W. White, Pantex Site Representatives  
**SUBJECT:** Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending May 25, 2001

**DNFSB Activity Summary:** H. Waugh was on site Tuesday through Friday. W. White was on site all week.

**W54 Pit Storage:** In March 2001, BWXT moved several W54 pits from one nuclear materials staging bay to another. This move was apparently accomplished without notifying program management personnel in the nuclear materials organization. The bay into which the pits were moved did not have all required controls for staging these pits. BWXT had agreed (in discussions with DOE and the design agency) to store these pits only in facilities that had been thermally characterized and that had remote temperature monitoring capability. The bay into which BWXT moved the pits had not been thermally characterized and had no thermal monitoring capability.

This came to the attention of program management personnel in April 2001 when they noticed that the Facility and Program Layout document identified the W54 staging bay as being in repair mode. Since facilities in repair mode are not allowed to stage nuclear materials, program management personnel assumed the pits had been moved and contacted facilities personnel to determine the new location. It was not until May 2001 that program management personnel realized the new staging facility did not have the required facility controls. Facilities adjacent to the new location of the W54 pits share the same cooling system and are thermally monitored. Records for these facilities for the past two months indicate no high temperature excursions. [II.A]

**Quality Assurance Survey:** DOE Albuquerque conducted a quality assurance survey this week of the BWXT and DOE/AAO quality assurance programs. The only finding from this review involved ambiguities in the use of two procurement systems: one for 35 account material and one for other materials. Other significant issues (such as the inconsistencies between laboratory specifications and BWXT procedures) were noted, but DOE concluded adequate corrective actions were already underway. Positive observations centered around improvements made by BWXT after assuming the contract this year. These include the development of the six sigma program as well as the elevation of the quality assurance program to a directorate. [II.A]

**Explosives Movement:** BWXT discovered this week that 1.4B explosives had been moved without authorization and without tracking by the explosives tracking center. The movement occurred sometime over the past month. The explosive part apparently was moved accidentally on a pallet containing multiple other parts. The movement was from 12-104 to 12-86. Both facilities are authorized for 1.4B explosives. 12-86 was not, however, the intended destination for the explosives part. The movement appears to be a violation of a specific administrative control requirement that was added to the Pantex technical safety requirements last year. The requirement (5.6.22.1) is that "movements of explosives . . . in the Zone 12 MAA ramps or loading docks will be coordinated such that they do not occur during [nuclear explosive] transportation in the ramps or loading docks." The mechanism used by Pantex to implement this requirement is the use of the Explosives Tracking Center to coordinate and track explosives moves. This move was not coordinated by the Explosives Tracking Center. At the time of the critique for this occurrence it was not known whether any nuclear explosive transportation was ongoing at the time of the explosives movement. [II.A]