

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 12, 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 October 12, 2001

DNFSB Activity Summary: The DNFSB Site office was closed on Monday for the Columbus Day Holiday. H. Waugh was on site for the remainder of the week. W. White was on leave Tuesday and Thursday and was on site for the remainder of the week.

W78 Contractor Readiness Assessment: BWXT held the closeout meeting for its contractor readiness assessment (CRA) of W78 operations this week. The CRA noted fourteen pre-start findings, three post-start findings and seven observations. Among the more significant pre-start findings are the following:

- ? The design agencies have not yet concurred with the use of weapons response information.
- ? Necessary criteria were not contained in implementing documents at specific points in the procedures to ensure compliance with technical safety requirements.
- ? The process for the analyzed tooling list is not formally defined or adequately implemented.
- ? The lightning stand-off distance for the W78 bay was not correctly marked.
- ? Facility crane preventive maintenance procedures are not published.
- ? Electrical troubleshooting in the operating procedures is a direct violation of nuclear explosive safety rules.
- ? Safety rules contained in the nuclear explosive safety rules and immediate action procedures for nuclear explosive operating procedures are not verbatim.
- ? Inaccuracies in the procedures exist.
- ? Two material handlers did not exhibit adequate knowledge of technical safety requirements.
- ? Training has not been completed on additional site-wide controls for all applicable plant personnel.

Of these pre-start findings, at least four were self-identified by the project team prior to the CRA. The CRA did observe that the conduct of operations was significantly improved over the previous assessment. The CRA also noted a significant improvement in W78 procedures. In general, the findings and observations of the CRA team appear to capture all of the significant deficiencies noticed by the Board's staff and site representative during the CRA. The most significant readiness issues appear to be with flow-down of authorization basis controls through the safety basis database. This database, a tool for validating authorization basis flow down, appears significantly improved over previous databases, but issues still remained.

The majority of the procedural issues observed during the CRA appeared to be with procedures that were not reviewed during the previous readiness assessment effort (repair and the completion of the cell procedure). Also of note, AAO personnel were present to observe the CRA during the final week. The path forward for W78 startup is to close the CRA pre-start findings, develop approved corrective action plans for the post-start findings, declare readiness, and conduct the Milestone 3 review. The DOE nuclear explosive safety study and readiness assessment are currently scheduled to begin in early November. [II.A]