

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 21, 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director

FROM: T. Dwyer and H. Waugh, Pantex Site Representatives

SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending April 21, 2000

DNFSB Activity Summary: H. Waugh and T. Dwyer were on site all week. OE R. West was on site Monday-Thursday observing DOE-AL Readiness Review training.

AL-R8 Sealed Insert (SI) Repackaging Line: M&H shut down both of the AL-R8 SI Repackaging Lines on Tuesday. M&H was conducting an Engineering Evaluation (EE) for their surveillance plan, and ended up rejecting [prior to use] a particular AL-R8 SI due to external discoloration on the side of the lid. Upon investigation of the defect by M&H Applied Technology personnel, it was determined that it had been caused by extended exposure to citric acid, which is used by the vendor during a required etching process. Apparently, the acid had not been completely removed from this particular canister. Subsequently, other AL-R8 SIs selected for the EE were also discovered to have similar discolorations. While they investigated the cause and scope of the problem, and developed corrective actions, M&H took the conservative step of suspending further repackaging. Therefore, AL-R8 SI throughput was only 11 this week. Repackaging on both lines should resume next week.^[II.A]

Readiness Issues: DOE-AL conducted readiness review training on site this week, as one of the corrective actions falling out of DOE's evaluation of the state of implementation of DOE Order 425.1A, *Startup and Restart of Nuclear Facilities*. [This evaluation had been requested by the Board in a letter to the Deputy Secretary of Energy dated August 26th, 1999.] There was limited AAO and M&H attendance. The training was conducted in 3 parts -- 1 session for managers, 1 session for readiness review team members, and 1 session for readiness review team leaders. The manager session was a brief [<2 hour] review of the order requirements, but did not address recent problems experienced in the DOE-AL system, which a manager should watch for and correct [e.g., poor Plans of Action, inadequate prerequisites leading to premature declarations of readiness, insufficient review team resources, inadequate review durations]. The team member and team leader sessions [~1.5 days each] provided an overview of the reference documents and review techniques. However, the training could be significantly improved by focusing on implementation plan development (i.e., tracing through from core requirements to core objectives to criteria review and approach documents). The team leaders would also benefit if more time were spent on how to manage review teams. Unrelated to the training, but indicative of further downturns in DOE-AL understanding of the importance of readiness reviews, it was learned that: [1] despite DOE-AL assurances to the contrary, funding levels for readiness reviews (e.g., travel monies) still fail to support the contention that readiness reviews are co-equal with NESS; and [2] ONDP is apparently driving a DOE-AL effort to force the W76 contractor RA, which was suspended last Monday, to resume May 1st, in advance of necessary tooling development, mass properties facility preparation, and safety basis issue resolution.^[II.A]

W79 Dismantlement Program: M&H efforts to restart the W79 Dissolution Workstation have devolved into 3 specific efforts: identify and validate design features relied upon as controls [part of the continuing configuration management problem]; resolve exudate issues; and resolve a potential lightning isolation issue. A formal program plan is being developed. M&H has indicated the plan will include tailored contractor and DOE readiness assessments.^[II.A]