

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 17, 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director

FROM: H. Waugh and W. White, Pantex Site Representatives

SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending November 17, 2000

DNFSB Activity Summary: H. Waugh was on site all week. W. White was at Rice University on Wednesday and on site for the remainder of the week. J. Deplitch, C. Coones, R. West and L. McGrew were on site all week to observe the revalidation of the W88 Nuclear Explosive Safety Study (NESS) and the W88 DOE readiness assessment.

W88 Milestone 3 Review: The Standing Management Team conducted its Milestone 3 review of the W88 new authorization basis on Monday. The team concluded the W88 program was ready to proceed to the formal review process, which had already begun the previous week with the revalidation of the W88 Nuclear Explosive Safety Study. There were questions raised during the review about the use of weapon components (through verification of the desired configuration) as TSR-level controls, but no action was taken.^[II.A]

Revalidation of the W88 NESS: The revalidation of the W88 NESS continued this week with demonstrations of radiography operations and mechanical disassembly in various bays. The Chairman and senior members of the NESS were particularly active and engaged, providing leadership and initiating appropriate lines of technical inquiry. To facilitate observation of W88 demonstrations, MHC set up live video and audio feed from the mechanical disassembly bay to the conference room in 12-28. This allowed members of the NESS group and the readiness assessment team who were unable to get into the bay (the personnel limit is 25) to observe the demonstrations.^[II.A]

W88 DOE Readiness Assessment: DOE's readiness assessment of W88 operations began on Tuesday morning with observations of radiography operations. The readiness assessment team appears to be competent, but several members of the team have limited experience with Pantex operations. During the first week, problems were noted with reading of radiographs and with inadequate procedures. In addition, the W88 project team, much like the W76 project team, appears to have difficulty supporting the readiness assessment team and the NESS group simultaneously. It is not clear that MHC has adequate resources and personnel to be fully responsive to both groups.^[II.A]

Ultraviolet-Activated Deluge System: On Tuesday, MHC personnel changed the configuration of the control panel for the ultraviolet detectors in several Pantex facilities to allow the detectors to initiate automatic activation of the deluge fire suppression system. This was the first in a series of facility groups to undergo this configuration change. MHC is continuing its program to connect ultraviolet-activated deluge for other facilities. It is not clear whether the current schedule (which has most facilities connected by the end of the year) is achievable.^[II.A]