

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 5, 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director
FROM: T. Dwyer and H. Waugh, Pantex Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending March 5, 1999

DNFSB Activity Summary: H. Waugh was on site all week. T. Dwyer was on site Monday through Thursday, and at DOE-AL for the SMT Meeting on Friday.

W56 Dismantlement Program: The 1st unit of the W56 Dismantlement run has been set aside, pending resolution of mechanical problems with the [potentially galled] threaded joint that connects the W56 primary to the secondary. Work on the 2nd unit was initiated Tuesday. Production resource scheduling difficulties continued to interfere with smooth progress on the program, but by Friday, this [replacement] unit was in position for the PTs to attempt separation of the primary from the secondary. Once again, the threaded joint resisted all efforts to loosen it.

W87 Life Extension Program (LEP): W87 LEP Engineering Evaluation (EE) work on unit #2 was completed last Saturday, when it was formally accepted by AAO. Monday evening, DOE-AL approved the W87 safety basis, although with significant caveats. In particular, Mechanical Safe and Arming Detonator (MSAD) operations are not authorized. DOE-AL has identified 12 specific improvements required in the HAR/ABCD before MSAD operations will be considered for authorization. The DOE-AL Safety Basis Review Team (SBRT) provided a report (Safety Evaluation Report -- SER) that also includes recommendations that must be addressed prior to MSAD operations. The SER clearly states that the "HAR does not make a convincing case that all W87 related hazards and associated credible scenarios have been identified." Additionally, the SER goes on to state that the "HAR and ABCD provide a weak definition of the qualitative residual risk." Overall, it is significant to note that in the approval letter, DOE-AL WPD declared that the "W87 HAR and ABCD fall short of... expectations for minimum acceptable quality of a technical document used to authorized nuclear explosive operations." M&H will begin their Readiness Assessment (RA) the week of March 9th -- it will consist of a table-top review of procedures and operations. The scope of the RA, as well as its date of commencement, are dependent on receipt of the W87 LEP Project Team's RA Plan of Action (POA), which remains unapproved as of close of business today. The DOE RA is projected to occur March 22nd - April 9th, including observation of actual operations on both units #3 and #4.

Standing Management Team (SMT) Meeting: The SMT met Friday to review proposed Project Team plans for the W62 and the W88, as well as the Integrated Weapons Activity Plan (IWAP). A significant part of the discussions associated with each of these items focused on HAR/ABCD development. There was even a late addition to the agenda -- an M&H presentation on lessons learned from the W56 and W87 HAR/ABCD efforts. Significantly, at least 4 separate groups are developing guides/expectations for HARs/ABCDs: DP-21, WPD, M&H, and the Design Agencies. It does not appear that there is any integration between these groups, although they all appear to find the [final draft] DOE HAR standard insufficient for their needs.