

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 28, 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 May 28, 1999

DNFSB Activity Summary: H. Waugh was on site Monday-Thursday and on leave on Friday. T. Dwyer was on site Monday and Friday, and on leave Tuesday through Thursday.

AL-R8 Sealed Insert (SI): M&H project management considers all AL-R8 SI procedure changes arising out of the Engineering Evaluation (EE) held May 10th-13th to have been properly incorporated, and PT training will commence next Tuesday. The closure package for all of the pre-start findings has been submitted to the Design Agencies. The M&H Management Self Assessment is currently scheduled to begin next Friday. In the mean time, an issue has arisen involving the readiness review process to be used to start-up this activity (see below).^[II.B.2.b]

Readiness Review Processes: In the last several months, the Board has issued a number of letters to DOE with regard to improving the readiness review process at Pantex (e.g., May 18, 1999; March 12, 1999; January 15, 1999; November 30, 1998). However, current plans to start-up the AL-R8 SI Repackaging Line and the Building 12-116 Weight and Leak Check System (WALS) do not follow the guidance highlighted in these letters (i.e., DOE Order 425.1 and associated standard DOE-STD-3006-95). In both cases, M&H has determined that a Readiness Assessment will be required prior to start-up, and has developed a Readiness Assessment Plan of Action. In both cases, the AAO Manager has retained start-up authority. However, AAO does not plan to conduct an independent Readiness Assessment following completion of the contractor Readiness Assessment, correction of pre-start findings (if any), and formal contractor declaration of readiness. Rather, AAO will “shadow” the contractor Readiness Assessment team, while at the same time attempting to satisfy the requirements of a separate AAO Readiness Assessment Plan of Action (e.g., *U.S. DOE Plan of Action for Shadowing the Contractor Readiness Assessment of the AL-R8 SI Container Process, Pantex Plant*).^[II.B.2.b]

Building 12-116 Thermal Characterization Test: The Building 12-116 Thermal Characterization Test continued this week in recovery mode, with pit surface temperatures and room air temperatures being recorded as chiller and air handler service was restored. Within 8 hours, air temperatures had dropped ~4°F and pit surface temperatures had dropped ~2.5°F. However, since the initial drop, temperatures have been on a “roller coaster” as technicians attempt to dial in the proper heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) settings. Additionally, when facility personnel were initially tasked to restart the chiller/air handler, a 1 day delay was encountered because equipment warm-up requirements had not been satisfied. Overall, it appears that facility personnel training and HVAC equipment procedures require review and possible modification. The air and pit surface temperature trend remains downward, and as of this morning all pit surface temperatures are within 1.3°F of their initial (steady state) readings. As reported last week, the maximum pit surface temperature rise was 5.1°F, and maximum air temperature rise was 5.9°F during the period air conditioning was secured.^[II.B.1.a]