

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 18, 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 June 18, 1999

DNFSB Activity Summary: T. Dwyer and H. Waugh were on site all week.

AL-R8 Sealed Insert (SI): M&H continued to work on open issues from the AL-R8 SI MSA. Included are the authorization basis issues that were known prior to the MSA: AAO approved the AL-R8 SI Container Package for on-site use on Wednesday, and the BIO change approval is in the signature chain. The AL-R8 SI Operating Procedures have been revised, and the PTs are currently being trained [practicing] on the new versions. MSA team members will conduct 1 last observation of PTs performing the entire process, most likely next Monday. M&H will then declare readiness, and proceed with the contractor Readiness Assessment next Tuesday.

The readiness review question raised in the May 28th Pantex Site Representative letter has been answered: On Wednesday, AAO delegated full start-up authority to the contractor -- no DOE Readiness Assessment will be conducted. The AAO Manager believes that the relatively low risk associated with AL-R8 SI operations, their similarity to previously approved and conducted pit packaging efforts, and the paucity of available AAO resources require that he assign his personnel to other ongoing tasks. Additionally, he has indicated that he wishes to provide M&H with a chance to prove themselves in a situation for which expectations are especially clear cut. However, given recent M&H history in the area of readiness reviews, the site representatives and Board staff intend to observe this activity closely.

Of note, in the course of discussions with AAO and DOE-AL on this issue, it has become apparent that none of the DOE-AL personnel involved have a clear understanding of how DOE Order 425.1A, *Startup and Restart of Nuclear Facilities*, applies to a new start nuclear activity in an existing [operating] nuclear facility.^[II.B.2.b]

W56 Dismantlement Program: M&H will open a new occurrence report in place of the previously canceled one, to properly track closure of the possible thermal reaction issue associated with the W56 Dismantlement Program. This issue is being treated as a Potential Inadequacy in the Safety Analysis (PISA) under DOE Order 5480.21, *Unreviewed Safety Questions*. AAO has directed M&H to complete a USQD, noting that the LLNL/SNL position paper is not sufficient to resolve the issue. In the mean time, M&H has determined that it is not necessary to wait for completion of the Design Agency load path modeling/analysis before resuming torquing operations. Rather, an old tool, previously unknown to the current Project Team, has been identified by a retired PT as *the primary untorquing device* he used in nearly every previous disassembly. This tool, a "porta-power" (hydraulic ram), provides feedback on the pressure (torque) being applied to the primary-to-secondary joint. Based on PT recollections, M&H has not yet approached the "usual" breakaway torque.^[II.B.2.a]

Explosives Tracking: On Monday, M&H security personnel delivered several boxes to Shipping & Receiving (Building 16-19) for return to DOE-AL security. 1 box contained flash cartridges, a class 1.3 explosive. Explosives are not allowed in Building 16-19 -- subsequent investigation revealed that the material had been introduced on site via TSD (without shipping documents) for a security exercise; had never been entered into site Explosive Tracking Center records; and was being transported in an improperly marked box on an un placarded vehicle.^[II.B.2]