

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 19, 1998

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 19, 1998

DNFSB Activity Summary: Harry Waugh was on site all week. Timothy Dwyer was on site Monday thru Wednesday, and attending training all day on Friday. Dan Burnfield was on site Monday thru Wednesday observing W62 NESS Revalidation activity.

W62 NESS Revalidation: Revalidation of the existing, expired W62 NESS continued this week, but the NESS Group was not able to conclude their deliberations by Friday, as originally planned. A significant number of issues remain to be examined, but, in particular, additional sensitive information concerning potential vulnerabilities to electrical energy will be required of SNL. A briefing has been scheduled at DOE-AL on July 7th. The NESS Revalidation itself will resume July 21st. Perhaps the most disturbing note this week was sounded during the W62 demonstrations. The NEOPs presented to the NESS Group were not in final form -- but even with proposed changes inserted, the number of procedural errors was overwhelming, and in several places the NEOPs just did not work. The tooling in use did not represent modified tooling expected to be used on a WR -- aside from the fact that the trainer on which the NEOP was demonstrated was beyond the point of allowing realistic simulation. The PTs conducting the demonstration were not well-versed in the procedure. Based on this demonstration, the Site Representatives do not believe it is prudent for the NESS Group to accept M&H assurances that only a select few W62 NEOPs need be reviewed, and that the rest, converted from O&Is to NEOPs but otherwise "unchanged," are beyond the scope of the NESS Revalidation.

Building 12-116: M&H and AAO have formally declared Building 12-116 ready for the DOE ORR. One particular point of contention remains: the 12-116 HVAC system. However, AAO has determined that the ORR can begin while M&H draws up a contingency plan to address loss of air conditioning. Note that HVAC is not specifically identified as a critical safety system in the 12-116 SAR. AAO has accepted the argument that those pits that might be particularly vulnerable to thermal issues are not among the families identified for storage in 12-116, although no facility controls identified to date explicitly preclude M&H from storing non-strategic reserve pits in the building. The DOE ORR will commence Monday.

Authorization Basis Controls: In a situation similar to that outlined in the Board's letter of June 12th to DP-1 concerning Y-12, Pantex has experienced a continuing trend of Authorization Basis violations. Nine Occurrence Reports filed in the latter half of 1997 have been identified as reflecting improper implementation or management of Authorization Basis controls. Eleven similar 1998 Occurrence Reports have been filed as of May 31st. Further, the recent 12-116 Contractor ORR identified five deficiencies associated with inadequate control of the authorization basis. Based on this information, on June 11th, AAO sent a letter to M&H directing that a detailed plan of action to resolve this issue be developed within 10 days. A copy of the plan will be forwarded to the technical staff as soon as it is available.

W79 Cell Dissolution: Dissolution of the 2nd W79 Dismantlement Program unit was scheduled to begin on graves shift Wednesday morning. Restart was delayed because of Design Agency concerns growing out of the anomaly observed during midplate separation on this unit (see last week's letter). In particular, LLNL became concerned that this could be an indicator of the presence of a potentially pyrophoric material (aluminum hydride) not previously considered -- a potential USQ has been declared. Following further discussion with LLNL, M&H was authorized to proceed with dissolution of the 2nd unit (to reach a safe configuration), and it was completed successfully. The start of unit 3 is on hold pending further study by LLNL and SNL.

**Attachment
Upcoming Pantex Events:**

June 22-July 3 -- Building 12-116 DOE ORR

June 24 -- B53 Aft Cap Assy Cover NESS Planning Meeting**

June 25 -- Pit Thermal Meeting

June 30 -- Building 12-104A Paint Bay Milestone 2/NESS Planning Meeting**

July 1 -- ARGUS demonstration for NESSG**

??July?? -- Building 12-116 startup

July 6-10 W62 NESS Revalidation SNL Briefing (@ DOE-AL)**

July 7 -- Quarterly NMO Program Meeting

July 8 -- Quarterly Production Meeting

??July?? -- Building 12-94 AAU MSA**

July 21-24 -- W62 NESS Revalidation resumption (@ Pantex)**

???? -- B61-7 Limited Readiness Assessment

July 6-10 W62 NESS Revalidation resumption**

July 23 -- W78 SEP

July 27-31 -- B53 Aft Cap Assy Cover NESS

July 30-August 26 -- NES Electrical Tester Master Study

August 3-5 -- DP-3 review of BIO Upgrade status**

August 11 -- Public Meeting: Draft Surplus Pu PEIS**

August 28 -- Building 12-104A Paint Bay MSA commences

NOTES: ** highlights events which are new listings or for which schedule has changed