

# DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 11, 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 December 11, 1998

**DNFSB Activity Summary:** T. Dwyer and H. Waugh were on site all week. The Board was on site Tuesday, to discuss Recommendation 98-2, *Safety Management at the Pantex Plant*. G. Cunningham, J. McConnell, and W. Andrews supported the Board visit. W. White observed the PT-4174 NESS Tuesday-Thursday. C. Martin observed the W56 NESS Tuesday-Friday.

**W56 Dismantlement Program NESS:** The W56 Dismantlement Program NESS completed deliberations and is drafting their report. Out of 26 issues, 5 pre-start actions were identified: using a knife vs scissors to cut a component contaminated with HE; ensuring person-to-person control of detonator packaging; improving person-to-person control in bay/cell operations; transportation during lightning warnings; and tooling weldment QA. 5 issues were found not to threaten NES and were passed to the RA team. An issue regarding facility compliance with NEC Division II, Class 2 requirements was considered to be addressed by planned facility upgrades or exceptions that will be taken to the requirements. Several other issues identified during the walkdowns by the NESS group received only cursory evaluation. Overall, the W56 NESS group was not aggressive, and the team was not strong in the areas of hazard analysis methods, mechanical design principles, and the Pantex Explosive Safety Manual.

A review of the DOE-AL WPD-approved W56 ABCD by Board staff also revealed that nearly 20 additional controls should be considered for elevation to TSR-like status.

**PT-4174 NESS:** The PT-4174 NESS group met this week to approve the tester for use in W87 operations. Note that eventually this tester will be used in the W62 and W88 programs, although it is not clear whether this addition will be handled under NES change control or a separate NESS. Briefings by M&H, SNL, and LLNL clearly showed that use of the PT-4174 with the W87 program poses no nuclear explosive safety concerns during normal operations. In fact, this tester represents a significant safety enhancement in comparison to the PT-4077 tester it replaces. One issue raised during the week was DOE's failure to address abnormal environments to which the tester might be subjected. As discussed in one of the recommendations from the Electrical Equipment Control Program Master Study, DOE has not yet defined the abnormal environments against which testers must be evaluated. Consequently, the PT-4174 HAR and M&H SIID input excluded abnormal environment considerations. The NESS group briefly considered whether any credible environments might pose a particular concern for this tester with W87 operations, but ultimately left issue resolution to the [open] Master Study recommendation.

**Senate Pu Disposition Task Force Site Visit:** Texas Senator K. Bailey Hutchinson met Senator P. Domenici and several Senate staff personnel from the 6-member Task Force at Pantex on Tuesday. The Task Force had visited LANL on Monday to tour the prototype ARIES facility; they received briefings and demonstrations from Pantex personnel on weapon dismantlement processes and potential siting of the Pit Disassembly and Conversion Facility (PDCF) at Pantex.