

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 7, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR: G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director
FROM: T. Dwyer and H. Waugh, Pantex Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending November 7, 1997

DNFSB Activity Summary: Timothy Dwyer and Harry Waugh were on site all week.

Dynamic Balancer: The Dynamic Balancer Independent Review Team (IRT) final report has been issued; IRT findings were also presented to the Senior Management Team (DOE-AL, plus AAO Manager). The IRT recommended authorizing the Dynamic Balancing of W87s, pending completion of corrective action on the prestart findings (one by the IRT, and one by the Project Team, as outlined in last week's letter). The IRT further recommended that authorization of balancing operations for programs other than the W87 be delegated to AAO, and require validation of readiness by AAO and issuance of a QER by the cognizant weapons laboratory. Although the Dynamic Balancer Project Team will be tasked to validate closure of the prestart findings, it was indicated that closure of the post-start findings from the IRT, as well as those generated by the (internal) Project Team Verification Review, would be left to M&H and AAO management. DOE-AL Management and the Project Team Leader agreed with AAO/M&H to treat correction of an overvoltage (overspeed) trip setpoint surveillance as an additional prestart. M&H is developing (for AAO approval) an implementation plan to address the post-start findings.

Of note, regarding the Project Team pre-start finding, M&H has recommended that the existing W87 POI fixture (on which the base weld was found to be incomplete) remain in service until an acceptable replacement can be manufactured. Handling of this issue, which essentially involves approving operations with tooling that does not meet specifications, remains the subject of much debate between M&H, AAO, and DOE-AL. DOE-HQ is also expected to voice strong opinions. M&H has not yet begun the procurement/manufacturing process for the new fixture.

In a further complication, the 12-60 Ramp structure (outside the Dynamic Balancer bay) is of increasing concern. M&H plans to begin moving the balancer to 12-84, bay 12, by March 1st. Secondary staging in 12-60 bays 3, 4, and 5 is discontinued -- all secondaries have been removed.

Pit Storage: The M&H Building 12-66 Conceptual Design Report was delivered to AAO this week. A copy has been obtained for Board staff review. The AT-400A Pit Repackaging Line entered its 6th week of shutdown (first reported in the September 26th Site Representative Letter).

W69 Program: W69 dismantlement efforts continued this week. The SE Core team observed operations on Wednesday as part of the closure process for NEOP changes implemented to resolve detonator assembly separation issues. No significant findings were reported.

Personnel Matters: DOE-AL has informed AAO that the AAO personnel ceiling for FY 98 is 87 (83 DP and 4 EM). Current manning is 87. The AAO Manager requested hiring authority for three additional positions (two Facility Representatives and one Risk Management Engineer) from DOE-AL, and was granted authority for the two Facility Representatives. The Vacancy Announcement for the AAO Senior Scientific Technical Advisor position (soon to be vacant) has not yet been posted; it has not yet been approved through DOE-HQ (Executive Resource Board).

Attachment

Upcoming Pantex Events:

November 13 -- NN-1 visit

November 17-19 -- Irreversibility (pit conversion to non-proliferable form) Meeting**

November 17-21 -- NESD Annual Appraisal

November 19-21 -- Congressional Committee Staffs visit:**
Senate Armed Services, Senate Appropriations
House National Security, House Appropriations

[unknown] -- Dynamic Balancer startup**

December 2 -- General Zettler visit

December 3 -- W69 Hemisphere/Detonator disposition begins (Zone 11)**

December 10 -- Pit Thermal Meeting

[unknown] -- NES Electrical Tester Master Study completion**

January 5-16 -- W56 SIRR

January 31 -- W56 SIID issued**

January 22 -- W79 NESS starts

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