

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

MEMO TO: Timothy Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: Tom Spatz, Pantex Site Representative
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Report for Week Ending October 5, 2012

DBFSB Staff Activity: T. Chapman, J. Deplitch, M. Helfrich, and J. Mercier were at Pantex this week to perform a review of the Pantex Emergency Management program.

Tooling Malfunction: B&W Pantex continues to pause operations on four weapon programs due to the failure of a lifting and rotating fixture. (See report for 9/21/12 and 9/28/12.) The pause only affects those operations that use the lifting and rotating fixture. This week, B&W Pantex was able to obtain authorization basis (AB), nuclear explosive safety (NES), and NNSA Production Office (NPO) approval to transfer the unit from the broken fixture to a good fixture. B&W tooling engineers are performing an engineering evaluation of the cause of the failure with the broken fixture.

Electrically Powered Medical Devices (EPMDs) in Nuclear Facilities: This week, B&W Pantex sent out a site-wide announcement stating that, effective immediately, EPMDs are not allowed in nuclear facilities containing nuclear explosives or any explosives. A production technician (PT) recently received an EPMD and was cleared by the medical department with no restrictions. The PT reviewed his general-use procedure, *Safety Requirements for Nuclear and Explosives-Only Facilities (F7-5001)*, for further clarification of restriction related to the EPMD. The procedure gives instructions on all types of EPMDs, and was interpreted by the PT as allowing the use of his EPMD in the nuclear explosive area. The safety basis does not allow EPMDs within 6.5 feet of the nuclear explosive or explosives. The PT's access to the facility was removed when his supervisor noticed the EPMD. B&W management is addressing the event in the Problem Evaluation Request system.

Shipping Container Positive Unreviewed Safety Question (USQ): This week, B&W Pantex issued a potential inadequacy in the safety analysis (PISA) and a positive USQ for shipping containers that the Y-12 plant identified as suspect. The AB department received new information that a certain type of packing foam outgassed more than expected and could result in over pressurization during the design basis fire event. B&W Pantex paused all moves with the suspect containers. The AB department sent an Evaluation of the Safety of the Situation to the NPO, which NPO approved. Shortly after approval to continue operations, the AB department issued a second PISA related to new information regarding the foam density. B&W Pantex has sent a request to Y-12 for information related to the foam density. Movement of the suspect containers remains paused.

Authorization Basis Department Concerns: This week NPO sent two letters to the B&W Engineering Division manager related to performance of the Authorization Basis department. In the first letter, *AB Department Performance*, NPO identified five examples of high-level issues with the AB department performance including issues that sometimes take years to resolve. In the second letter, *Adverse Trend of Qualified Staff Shortages Within the Authorization Basis Department*, NPO expressed concern that, due to staffing shortages, issues identified by oversight agencies and timely resolution of those issues were perceived by B&W management as not impacting nuclear safety. NPO requested a response within 30 days.