

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 14, 2014

MEMO TO: Steven Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: Thomas Spatz, Pantex Site Representative
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Report for Week Ending November 14, 2014

Conduct of Operations: Consolidated Nuclear Security, LLC (CNS) paused operations in one facility due to a failed electrical test. CNS code management personnel entered erroneous information on a spreadsheet used by the code management system technicians. During a subsequent operation, the technicians were not able to complete the procedure because the code management system computer would not accept the erroneous information. The technicians notified the process engineer of the problem. The process engineer, nuclear and explosive safety, and authorization basis personnel reported to the facility and decided to disconnect the code management system computer from the item to establish a safe and stable configuration. The following day, the process engineer identified the initial error on the spreadsheet and CNS paused all code management system operations. The process engineer wrote a nuclear explosive engineering procedure to complete the operation with corrected spreadsheet values. CNS held an event critique and will address the event in their Problem Evaluation Request system. CNS has resumed operations.

Conduct of Operations: A CNS Facility Representative (FR) reported the discovery of a trouble signal on the fire alarm control panel. The signal indicated a problem with the tamper sensor on the outside stem and yoke (OS&Y) valve in a nuclear explosive facility. The FR reported the trouble signal to the fire protection engineer and the emergency services dispatch center. Maintenance personnel reset the trouble signal the following day. The nuclear explosive facility was operational during this period.

Container Stacking Requirements: CNS Quality Specialist identified a new container issue while performing an extent of condition review of suspect/counterfeit vendor documentation for Department of Transportation (DOT) 7A containers. (See report for 5/23/2014.) The specialist identified that the stack tests performed by a particular vendor were not in accordance with DOT specifications. The vendor had been performing the stack tests with empty containers, while the requirement is to perform the tests with a liquid or solid filler material. The specialist noticed that other vendors were reporting stack test results with 98% fill for liquids and 95% fill for solids. CNS has already implemented controls to prevent the inadvertent use of these containers due to the previous discovery, and no additional immediate action was required. CNS has categorized this as “the discovery of any defective item or material, other than a suspect/counterfeit item or material, in any application whose failure could result in a loss of safety function, or present a hazard to public or worker health and safety.”

Safety Evaluation Report (SER) for Electro-Static Discharge (ESD) Scenario: The NNSA Production Office (NPO) issued a SER approving Sylgard™ pump operations. The SER contains no conditions of approval or technical review comments. NPO approved the SER based on the design feature functional requirement that credits the conductivity of the Sylgard™ pump nozzle, and the fact that whenever the pump is used the nozzle is held by a PT who is part of the conductive pathway to ground. The existing Sylgard™ pump meets the functional requirement without any modification. The Justification for Continued Operation expires on January 16, 2015.