DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 1, 2015

MEMO TO: Steven Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: Christopher Berg, Acting Pantex Site Representative
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Report for Week Ending May 1, 2015

Special Tooling Safety Catch Damage: On April 25, 2015, Production Technicians (PTs) suspended a nuclear explosive disassembly operation and placed the unit in a safe and stable configuration, after observing a crack in the safety catch of a utilized piece of special tooling (Forward Disassembly Fixture). PTs observed the crack subsequent to installing the vacuum fixture special tooling onto the unit and engaging the vacuum. As a result, Consolidated Nuclear Security, LLC (CNS), paused operations with this piece of special tooling, and Process Engineering personnel are drafting a Nuclear Explosive Engineering Procedure (NEEP) to remove the vacuum fixture from this unit.

Subsequently, PTs identified two additional pieces of special tooling with varying degrees of safety catch damage: a vacuum fixture about to be utilized in a nuclear explosive operation and the fixture supporting the anomalous unit described below. In addition, similar damage was noted in a piece of special tooling a few months prior to these discoveries. CNS is developing a path forward, which includes a special tooling Engineering Evaluation.

The vacuum fixture safety catches are a safety-class credited feature of the special tooling. As a result, this event concerns the degradation of a credited safety feature of a safety-class Structure, System, or Component. On April 30, 2015, CNS entered this event into the New Information process.

Anomalous Unit Update: On January 26, 2015, PTs suspended a nuclear explosive disassembly operation and placed the unit in a safe and stable configuration, after observing an unanticipated crack in a high explosive charge. (See report for 1/30/2015.) During the week of April 20, 2015, the NEEP for unit disassembly was successfully demonstrated for the Nuclear Explosive Safety Change Evaluation (NCE) team. The NCE report was released to the NNSA Production Office on April 28, 2015, and contained no findings, issues, or deliberation topics. The report recommends that CNS Process Engineering and Nuclear Explosive Safety be present to observe the operation.

Prior to performing the unit disassembly operation, as noted above, PTs identified damage to the utilized special tooling's safety catch. Consequently, CNS will draft an additional NEEP and corresponding special tooling Engineering Evaluation to address this concern.

Severe Weather Onsite: On April 26, 2015, the Pantex Plant lost computer connections due to inclement weather, which resulted in the loss of WebEOC (an event reporting logbook) at the Pantex Operations Center (PXOC). This resulted in the Daily Event Report for the following day containing several hours of delayed entry submissions. Additionally, during the inclement weather, PXOC briefly lost power; however, the uninterruptable power supply and diesel generator successfully maintained complete functionality of PXOC during the event. Due to the large amount of rainfall, standing water was noted in several bays and corridors in Zone 11, as well as Zone 12 ramps.