

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

August 28, 2020

TO: Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director
FROM: Miranda McCoy, Resident Inspector
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending August 28, 2020

Conduct of Operations: CNS identified a number of events late last week and this week involving human error in initiating or complicating the scenario. The events indicate issues with conduct of operations and conduct of engineering. Pantex has experienced a number of similar lapses in the past year (see 8/7-21/20, 7/10-31/20, and 6/19/20 reports for examples). CNS management intends to conduct a sitewide pause and briefing next week. Last summer, CNS paused work to brief operations personnel on events and reiterate CNS's performance excellence expectations; NPO subsequently transmitted a letter to CNS communicating their observation of an adverse trend in conduct of operations, and directing CNS to develop a corrective action plan (see 8/9/19 and 8/16/19 reports). CNS continues to work identified corrective actions.

- CNS identified that unauthorized nuclear explosive operations had been performed on several units late last year. Starting in January 2019, CNS safety analysis engineering declared several potential inadequacies of the safety analysis (PISA) regarding charge generation hazards for one weapon program (see 1/18/19, 3/29/19, 5/31/19, and 10/25/19 reports). CNS implemented an operational restriction to not authorize operations within the scope of the program's hazard analysis report. This operational restriction was implemented by placing applicable procedures in an inactive status within the relevant procedure retrieval system, thereby precluding production technicians from accessing or working the procedures. However, CNS did not place the procedure for code management system (CMS) operations into an inactive status. Technicians subsequently performed CMS operations on several units. CNS noted the discrepancy approximately eight months later when looking into performing CMS operations on additional units, and declared a technical safety requirement (TSR) violation.
- CNS craft workers performed work on the fire suppression system for two nuclear explosive bays without entering appropriate limiting conditions for operations (LCO) or having an approved work order. Subcontractors were performing a different work order, and the assisting craft workers believed the scope of their work was covered by that work order. The CNS facility representative (FR) was not notified, and therefore did not enter the appropriate LCOs. CNS declared a TSR violation for the event.
- CNS protective force personnel damaged a roll-up door in the material access area while conducting an exercise, rendering the roll-up door inoperable and in an open condition. The roll-up door constitutes part of the safety class facility structure. Protective force personnel established a door watch and made notifications via email to the operations center. The email specified the incorrect roll-up door, and the method of communication did not allow for positive confirmation of receipt. Upon arriving to the site the following day, a CNS FR was alerted to the roll-up door condition on the incorrect door. The FR investigated the incorrect door, noted no damage, and did not follow up to verify that the correct door had been identified. The following day, the operations center noted the correct door, and mechanics performed a work order to repair the damage. At no point did CNS barricade the affected ramp to prevent nuclear explosive transportation; however, due to schedule, no nuclear explosives were transported in the affected ramp.