

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

January 17, 2003

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director  
**FROM:** W. White, Pantex Site Representative  
**SUBJECT:** Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending January 17, 2003

**DNFSB Activity Summary:** W. White was on site all week.

**Training:** A week ago, DNFSB staff discussed the BWXT training program and the NNSA evaluation of that program with BWXT and NNSA personnel. The staff found significant problems with certain aspects of the BWXT training program. It does not appear that BWXT has an effective self-assessment program for training, particularly with respect to training for manufacturing personnel. PXSO also does not have an assessment program for evaluating BWXT training programs in accordance with DOE Order 5480.20A, *Personnel Selection, Qualification, and Training Requirements for DOE Nuclear Facilities*. The staff also noted the absence of a well-defined and thorough program that captures all of the recurring training necessary under DOE O 5480.20A and identified potential concerns with the comprehensiveness and difficulty of training examinations. [II.A]

**W88 Lifting Occurrence:** On Monday, BWXT and PXSO personnel met to consider the path forward in resolving the occurrence last week involving the lift of a W88 unit in a mass properties facility. BWXT planned resumption of operations following replacement of the hoist pendant which was presumed to have been the cause of the occurrence. However, BWXT was unable to identify, definitively, a root cause of the occurrence. At the suggestion of PXSO, BWXT agreed to conduct a more formal evaluation of the root cause of the occurrence and to leave hoisting operations in the mass properties bays suspended until the root cause was corrected. BWXT contacted the manufacturer and subsequently determined that the problem was with the braking system and not with the pendant. The problem with the braking system was a known problem. The manufacturer had already developed a modification to make recurrence of the braking problem less likely. BWXT now plans to resume operations after implementing the modification, but to continue pursuit of a better long-term solution. It is not clear, though, that, even with the proposed modification, these hoists have the reliability expected in a safety-class system for nuclear explosive operations. [II.A]

**W62 Contractor Readiness Assessment:** BWXT began its contractor readiness assessment (CRA) for startup of W62 disassembly and inspection operations under the new seamless safety process (SS-21). The CRA, which began Friday afternoon, will continue through the weekend. BWXT anticipates completion of the assessment by January 23. If completed on schedule, this will be the shortest CRA for an SS-21 program. [II.A]

**Material Movement Violation:** On Friday, BWXT overloaded a pit staging bay, exceeding the plutonium limits identified in the *Technical Safety Requirements for Pantex Facilities (TSRs)*. Two separate systems for inventory control failed, leading to the occurrence. Personnel moving the pits are required to manually calculate the inventory of the receiving facility. Personnel who performed the calculations identified the possible overload situation, but failed to account for all pits being moved, thus requesting the wrong number of pits be taken out of the move. Personnel verifying the move in the plant computer inventory system then identified an overload condition with the reduced move. However, a data entry error had occurred, and, after correcting the error, personnel assumed the overload warning was a result of the error. In correcting the error, however, personnel failed to re-enter one of the pits as being dispatched. After the movement was complete, personnel were unable to accept one of the pits into the bay because it had not been dispatched in the computer system. At this point, the receiving bay had exceeded its maximum plutonium limit. [II.A]