

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 29, 2001

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: H. Waugh and W. White, Pantex Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending June 29, 2001

DNFSB Activity Summary: W. White was on site all week. H. Waugh was on leave.

W78 Hazards Analysis Report: On Thursday, BWXT officially submitted page changes to the W78 Hazards Analysis Report (HAR) to NNSA/AAO. These changes addressed formal comments by the Safety Basis Review Team. To maintain the current schedule, NNSA/AAO must issue its Safety Evaluation Report for the W78 HAR no later than July 6. A preliminary review of the page changes submitted to NNSA/AAO indicates that several of the issues raised in the Board's June 21, 2001, letter to NNSA were not addressed. In particular, BWXT chose to ignore the requirement in Chapter 11.8 of the Development and Production Manual that verification of the safe state of certain weapon components be a technical safety requirement if that component can change state and if it is relied upon in developing the weapon response for the hazards analysis. Instead, BWXT asserted that Chapter 11.8 of the D&P Manual is to be revised to no longer require the verification if the design agency asserts the component would not have changed position. No such revision has been approved by NNSA. [II.A]

Pit Repackaging Program: As of Thursday, BWXT had repackaged 220 pits for the month. The total number of pits repackaged in June will set a new record for pits repackaged in a month. This is the third consecutive month in which more than 200 pits were repackaged. Despite this continuing positive trend in the pit repackaging program, several outstanding issues remain with respect to the handling and staging of pits:

- ▼ The initial lots of Inconel bolts are still undergoing acceptance testing and have not yet been approved for use. The cause for the lengthy delay appears to be the lack of well-defined acceptance criteria for new bolts. Appropriate acceptance criteria were not developed until after the first several lots of bolts had been received.
- ▼ Anomalies in leak check data for a few pits have halted processing of those pits, but no path forward for addressing the anomalies has yet been identified by the design agency.
- ▼ In October 2000, the Pantex contractor requested that NNSA/AAO provide direction on whether the thermal controls in place for pit storage and staging are quality controls or safety controls. In February 2001, NNSA/AAO requested that NNSA/AL task the design agencies to determine whether the specified maximum pit temperatures are based on quality or safety criteria and to provide information on the temperature where pit cladding integrity for each pit type would be compromised. This issue has not yet been resolved.
- ▼ NNSA, BWXT, and the design agency have not yet reached agreement with respect to the pit cleaning specification for W56 pits. To address potential corrosion concerns, the design agency specification requires these pits be cleaned within 8 weeks of removal from the high explosive assembly. BWXT considers this time requirement unnecessary and would prefer to postpone any pit cleaning activity until an automated pit cleaning station can be developed. An automated pit cleaning station would reduce the radiation exposure of BWXT personnel responsible for cleaning the pits. On February 26, 2001, NNSA/AAO wrote NNSA/AL requesting specific direction on this issue within 30 days. On May 30, 2001, NNSA/AAO once again wrote NNSA/AL asking for a position on this issue. To date, there has been no response. [II.A]