

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 3, 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: T. Dwyer and H. Waugh, Pantex Site Representatives

SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending March 3, 2000

DNFSB Activity Summary: T. Dwyer was on site all week, although Friday included attendance at the DOE-AL SMT. H. Waugh was able to work part-time Thursday and Friday.

Authorization Basis Issues: Last week, the W88 Existing Operations Reauthorization Project (EORP) Team received a letter from SNL indicating that a new scenario had been identified for inclusion in the W88 HAR. The scenario was stated to carry the potential for inadvertent nuclear detonation, and have a postulated frequency of occurrence greater than 10^{-6} . Receipt of this letter caused significant upset in current M&H project team activities and schedules. Now, however, it appears that this letter is an outgrowth of last summer's SNL gyrations on reliance on specific internal weapon features. [Recall SNL letters of June 29th, July 19th, and October 1st on lightning; and on October 12th and 13th, sequentially suspending and then releasing W88 weapons response data for use in the HAR.] The issue raised last week was, in fact, the same subject addressed in the October 12th/13th letters, was specifically addressed in W88 hazards tables [entry N88-301731-3, Step 168.2], and was previously explicitly screened out by SNL [per SNL-1]. After detailed meetings with SNL, M&H has reported to AAO that no new safety information has been developed -- rather, SNL is implementing an 11th hour change in policy. Therefore, M&H has asked AAO to intervene off-line with SNL on this issue. ^[II.A]

Master Authorization Agreement: Based on the scope and number of issues raised in the M&H Management Self-Assessment of the *Pantex Plant Master Authorization Agreement (AA) for Nuclear Operations* (MNL-258600), contractor corrective actions were taking longer than anticipated. M&H therefore requested and received permission from AAO to delay implementation of the Master AA to coincide with the implementation of the sitewide TSRs [see below]. In a separate but related note, the AAO Manager has been informed [verbally] that DOE-AL will soon empower him to be the signature authority for both facility safety bases and weapons safety bases, as well as DOE Order 425.1A readiness reviews. This is a significant step in moving the approval authority closer to the work. Acquisition of additional manpower to support these areas is still being discussed -- the impending disestablishment of the DOE-AL SASD has led to a request that some of these resources be reassigned to the area office. ^[II.A]

Sitewide Technical Safety Requirements (TSRs): A contractor Readiness Assessment (RA) of the implementation of Sitewide Technical Safety Requirements (TSRs), as converted from the Pantex Critical Safety Systems Manual (MNL-1101), was completed Wednesday. A team of 17 individuals spent 2+ weeks conducting this review. The RA report identifies 21 pre-start findings, 6 post-start findings, and 13 observations. Of note, over half of the pre-start findings are associated with the maintenance/surveillance program required to support the TSRs. M&H has 10 days to correct the findings given the March 13th TSR implementation deadline. ^[II.A]

Contractor Issues: On Wednesday, prospective bidders on the Pantex Plant Request for Proposals (RFP) were informed that DOE-AL had changed the proposal submission deadline from March 10th to March 20th. Several factors contributed to the change, including issuance of the 4th revision to the RFP this week, and some concerns with information dissemination. DOE-AL has also changed the "past performance" submission requirements, but is still requiring the "past performance" part of each proposal to be submitted by March 10th. ^[II.B]