

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 7, 1997

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director
FROM: Jim McConnell and Harry Waugh, Pantex Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending March 7, 1997.

1. DNFSB Activity Summary: Both Jim McConnell and Harry Waugh were on site all week.

2. Issue Follow-Up:

a. Radiography Restart: The Satellite Activity Restart Project Team continued work this week to restart radiography operations on nuclear explosive packages (NEP). The project team submitted changes to the Basis for Interim Operations and Critical Safety Systems Manual last week to DOE-HQ and DOE-AL for review. Gene Ives (DP-20) is the approval authority for these Authorization Basis changes. This week, DOE-HQ and DOE-AL provided comments on the revised documents. The project team and the independent review team discussed their comments on Friday and resolved all differences except one philosophical point: Does the linear accelerator system require a safety class shutdown system that is independent of the "normal" Linac shut down system? The proposed BIO/CSSM changes takes credit for the normal shutdown method of the Linac, which terminates the exposure automatically at a preset cumulative dose, as an engineered shutdown feature. The independent review team stated that the system should have an engineered safety class shut down system that is independent of the normal operating system. Both of these positions will be presented to Gene Ives for his decision reportedly on Monday.

The Board staff also reviewed the BIO and CSSM. The staff intends to observe the outcome of the discussions between the project team and the independent review team to see if the staff's issues are addressed. In the meantime, there are still several issues that must be resolved before radiography operations can resume. Many of the procedures and training can not be finalized until the Authorization Basis is approved. Additionally, Mason and Hanger has identified hardware problems with the crane controller for the Linac in Building 12-84 Bay 1 (the 8 MeV Linac) that will take about a week to repair. One of the new controls on radiography is that the Linac source must be at least 4 meters from the NEP -- this requires a positive control on the crane that moves the Linac.

b. MC3395 Weapons Program Readiness Review: Mason and Hanger completed the Weapons Program Readiness review for the removal of the MC3395 from the W79 shipping and storage container this week. The review resulted in six pre-start findings, two post-start findings, and nine observations. The review team was complementary about the line management preparations for the review. This was a significant improvement from the line management preparations for previous reviews involving the W79, such as the RA for rocket motor removal (see Pantex Weekly Letter dated September 13, 1996). Resolution of the findings will require revision of some of the Nuclear Explosive Operating Procedures (NEOPs), but the program manager believes all necessary changes and subsequent DOE approvals can be completed such that the Production technicians will be able to begin operations on March 26.

3. Additional Information:

a. Potential Security Guard Force Strike: Negotiations between Mason and Hanger and the International Guard Union of America (IGUA) continue but are reported to be behind schedule. There are several issues still to be resolved before the current contract expires on March 17. If the contract is not signed this weekend, a contingency plan will be executed. This plan calls for a temporary guard force made up of non-union guards from around the complex to fly to Amarillo and begin Pantex-specific training next week. It is unclear at this time what impact an IGUA strike will have on Pantex, but DOE expects that the temporary guard force should be able to support some amount of continuing work in the Material Access Areas in both Zone 4 and Zone 12.

4. Future Activities:

- a. February 4-March ? - W69 Dismantlement NESS
- b. March 13 - Pantex ISM Senior Managers' Meeting
- c. March 14 - W56 Project Team Meeting
- d. March 18-20 - W78 Archiving Meeting @ SNL/NM
- e. March 25 - W79 MC3395 Removal begins
- f. March 25-27 - W56 Milestone 2 Meeting @ Pantex
- g. April 4 - W79 DMSO Check Out RA starts
- h. April 9 - Quarterly Production Meeting
- i. May 15 - M&H AT-400A Corporate ORR begins (estimate)
- j. June ? - DOE AT-400A ORR (following conclusion of M&H ORR)

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