

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 1, 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR: S.A. Stokes, Technical Director

FROM: J.W. Plaue

SUBJECT: Los Alamos Report for Week Ending December 1, 2017

DNFSB Staff Activity: R.P. Arnold and P.J. Migliorini augmented oversight activities, including walk-downs of the Plutonium Facility, Chemistry and Metallurgy Research building, Area G, and the Weapons Engineering Tritium Facility.

Management: On Tuesday, the leadership of Los Alamos National Security, LLC announced that Terry Wallace will succeed Charlie McMillan as LANL Director effective beginning January 1, 2018.

Transuranic Waste Facility (TWF)–Safety Basis: On Thursday, TWF management concluded their New Information (NI) process and determined that changes are required to both the safety basis and technical safety requirements at the next annual update; however, the situation did not constitute a potential inadequacy of the safety analysis. The NI concerned an apparent inconsistency between language in the safety basis and an element of a safety management program associated with the waste acceptance criteria (see 11/24/2017 weekly). The safety function of the control in question, which protects key initial conditions in the safety analysis, is to: “prevent energetic events and runaway reactions resulting from noncompliant TRU [transuranic] waste contents, such as oxidizers, time-sensitive materials, incompatible chemicals, and oxidizer fuel mixtures.” The NI justification asserts that this function can be effectively implemented via a records check to ensure wastes to be received do not possess the hazardous waste codes for ignitability, corrosivity, or reactivity. The NI further suggests that this check is adequate to ensure that incoming wastes are approvable against the chemical properties section of the waste acceptance criteria for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant.

Unremediated Nitrate Salt (UNS) Waste Treatment: On Wednesday, Area G operators commenced their campaign to pull the liners from the UNS containers and repackage into new 55 gallon drums. By midday Friday, they had completed 5 of the 26. Personnel at the Waste Characterization, Reduction, and Repackaging Facility continue maintenance activities, including troubleshooting a HEPA filter, in preparation for the upcoming UNS treatment activities.

Plutonium Facility–Glovebox Safety: On Tuesday, the glovebox safety program manager and a team of independent operators walked-down the glovebox involved in a recent glove breach (see 11/24/2017 weekly) and discovered a potential latent sharp. The sharp is associated with a latching mechanism used to secure external shielding to certain nuclear material containers. The latch is in a location consistent with the typical hand positioning needed to move the container in a glovebox, as well as the breach location found on the glove. They plan to issue a lessons learned and ensure that the latches are protected with tape or other materials when used inside a glovebox.

Emergency Management: On Thursday, the NNSA Field Office approved the Emergency Readiness Assurance Plan for fiscal year 2018. Goals of particular interest include: development of an all-hazards emergency management plan; establishment of a comprehensive and standardized facility preparedness program; enhancement of worker awareness of protective actions; and continued maturation of the group to improve planning, training, drills and exercises, and readiness assurance.