

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

January 24, 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR: Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director
FROM: J.W. Plaue and D. Gutowski, Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for Week Ending January 24, 2020

DNFSB Staff Activity: P.J. Migliorini supplemented the onsite office this week. On Thursday, a staff team conducted a teleconference with personnel from the NNSA Field Office and Triad. The discussion supported a complex-wide examination of how 10-year natural phenomena hazard updates are executed and integrated into facility safety bases.

Transuranic Waste Operations: On Thursday, Triad personnel declared a potential inadequacy of the safety analysis for the Transuranic Waste Facility associated with the use of a spatula-like tool for headspace gas sampling of waste containers (see 12/20/2019 report). This sampling is a part of the certification process needed to send waste containers to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plan and is performed by Central Characterization Program personnel. About sixty percent of Triad's existing container population awaits this testing. Gas sampling activities remain paused in Triad facilities. This issue has not affected gas sampling activities at Area G, which remain ongoing using the same tool.

Readiness: On Wednesday, Triad personnel executed their Joint Evaluation Team process to evaluate the level of formal readiness review for upcoming new activities. The team concluded that a new hot press and a new repackage, consolidate, and discard operation constituted expansions of existing capabilities because they were substantially similar to ongoing operations. As a result, Triad will be proposing to the NNSA Field Office that these activities do not require a formal readiness review. The team also reviewed the planned upgrade of the Radiological Laboratory Utility Office Building to a hazard category 3 nuclear facility. They determined that this change in operating status warranted an NNSA Operational Readiness Review.

Radiological Laboratory Utility Office Building: Triad personnel continue to investigate system adequacy and develop proposed remedies for gaps between the as-built systems and the codes and standards required for operation as a hazard category 3 nuclear facility (see 10/4/2019 report). In addition to these efforts, as part of the periodic update to the fire hazards analysis, fire protection engineers have identified significant deficiencies in the fire barriers throughout the building, including stairwells, elevator shafts, doorways, floor-to-floor penetrations, and 2-hour fire rated barriers separating fire areas. Triad has commenced additional extent-of-condition reviews, repairs, and compensatory measures since these deficiencies challenge life safety and fire protection code requirements.

Federal Oversight: A six person team consisting of senior federal and contractor personnel from other DOE and NNSA sites performed a Radiological Waste Peer review for both the NNSA Field Office/Triad and the EM Field Office/N3B. These reviews are happening across the DOE complex and are intended to be complementary to waste reviews being performed by the DOE Office of Enterprise Assessments. The peer review used a model similar to the NNSA Governance Peer Review (see 9/27/2019 report) in that it consisted primarily of discussions with federal and contractor personnel with a goal of identifying best practices and lessons learned to strengthen radioactive waste practices and processes. A key item noted by the team in their outbrief was for the EM and NNSA Offices and their respective contractors to continue efforts to better integrate their waste management missions. The review team plans to issue a final report in mid-February; a report that consolidates results from all of the assessed sites will follow.