

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 4, 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR: Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director
FROM: D. Gutowski, Resident Inspector
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for Week Ending June 4, 2021

Area G–Safety Basis: Last Thursday, N3B transmitted to the EM Field Office and EM Headquarters for approval a revised Justification for Continued Operations (JCO) for the Potential Inadequacy of the Safety Analysis (PISA) related to headspace flammable gas sampling (see 1/31/2020 report). EM personnel rejected a previous revision of this JCO (see 4/23/2021). The revised JCO attempts to address the EM concerns, and continues to propose a new Specific Administrative Control during flammable gas sampling that requires the filter vent cover to be removed within 10 hours. A supporting calculation estimates that it would take at least 22.5 hours to reach the lower flammability limit in a bounding drum with the vent covered.

Last Thursday, N3B also transmitted an Evaluation of the Safety of the Situation (ESS) for the PISA on horizontal sympathetic deflagrations for transuranic waste drums (see 4/30/2021 report). The eight unvented drums currently stored in Area G are not horizontally distanced from each other. The ESS adds a compensatory measure to limit the total material at risk (MAR) of the unvented drums. The eight drums together constitute less than 80 plutonium equivalent curies and so long as no additional unvented drums are added to the location, the consequences are protected as moderate. N3B will also prepare a JCO.

Also last Thursday, N3B transmitted a draft Chapter 3: Hazard and Accident Analysis and Control Selection for their new safety basis that will be developed per the modern DOE Standard 3009-2014 and informed by the developing revision to DOE Standard 5506.

Last Friday, N3B transmitted to the EM Field office and EM Headquarters for approval the ESS for the PISA on dome construction classification (see 4/30/2021 report). Of the three impacted domes, one does not currently store transuranic waste. All three have been restricted from receiving additional waste drums, however waste is not being moved out of the other two domes due to lack of space and a desire to minimize handling of drums with high MAR or potential chemical incompatibilities. N3B is preparing a JCO for this ESS as well.

Weapons Engineering Tritium Facility (WETF): Triad personnel concluded that the damaged fire door that was not properly latching represented a positive unreviewed safety question (see 5/7/2021 report). The condition was discovered on May 4, the PISA was declared on May 18, and the positive unreviewed safety question determination was made on May 28.

Emergency Management: On Thursday, Triad transmitted their response to the NNSA Field Office letter requesting a plan of action to address issues with improper emergency notifications (see 4/23/2021 report). The proposed plan of action includes a series of corrective actions to standardize emergency reporting requirements, improve emergency notification resources, and communicate leadership expectations for notifications. Many actions including rollout of new notification training have been completed already. Completion of all corrective actions is planned by the end of February 2022 with an effectiveness review to be performed in the same timeframe.