

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 29, 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR: Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director
FROM: D. Gutowski, Resident Inspector
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for Week Ending October 29, 2021

Plutonium Facility: On Thursday, the NNSA Field Office conditionally approved a safety basis addendum for the Plutonium Facility pertaining to missile barriers to protect confinement doors (see 6/25/2021 report). The addendum uses an adjacent structure as credited protection from wind borne missiles for both confinement doors on one side of the building. Previously, this approach had only been taken for one of the doors. The NNSA approval included two conditions of approval and three directed changes. The conditions of approval were to add a discussion of the impacts of indirect natural phenomena hazard events and to include an in-service inspection of the structure acting as a safety-class missile barrier in the Technical Safety Requirements.

Transuranic Waste Management: This week, Triad personnel performed a transuranic waste mobile loading activity in Technical Area 55. They received and unloaded TRUPACTs with standard waste boxes from Sandia National Laboratory containing items from plutonium experiments performed there. These will later be moved to Area G for storage and eventual certification to be disposed of as transuranic waste at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). The TRUPACTs were then reloaded with Triad-owned transuranic waste to ship to WIPP.

Area G: On Thursday, N3B personnel conducted an operations-based emergency management drill in Dome 231. The scenario was a fire during glovebag operations within the Dome 231 Perma-Con. Between the reduction in field drills due to COVID-19 and new hiring, this was the first field drill for approximately one third of the participants. Preparations for startup of glovebag operations were put on hold due to the safety basis issues at Area G following the contractor readiness assessment last year (see 12/11/2020 report). With implementation of the fixes to the safety basis in process, N3B personnel are resuming preparations to restart glovebag operations and other paused activities such as Corrugated Metal Pipe retrieval. Given the substantial time since the contractor readiness assessment, the Environmental Field Office directed that N3B reperform an appropriately scoped contractor readiness review prior to DOE performing the Federal readiness review.

Two weeks ago, N3B submitted to the Environmental Management Field Office for approval a Justification for Continued Operations (JCO) to address movement of unvented transuranic waste drums. The JCO stems from two potential inadequacies of the safety analysis: one from February pertaining to an inappropriate control during unvented drum movement (see 2/19/2021 report) and the other from April about horizontal sympathetic deflagrations of unvented drums (see 4/30/2021 report). The JCO proposes a series of interim controls for movement of unvented drums including using a critical lift plan. There are no new controls proposed for sympathetic deflagrations as they conclude that a horizontal sympathetic deflagration is bounded by an existing design basis accident.

Radiological Laboratory Utility Office Building (RLUOB): The NNSA Field Office concurred with Triad's conclusion that equipment installation in RLUOB supporting its transition to a hazard category 3 nuclear facility does not constitute a major modification (see 10/15/2021 report).