

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

August 19, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR: Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director
FROM: A. Boussouf and D. Gutowski, Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for Week Ending August 19, 2022

DNFSB Staff Activity: Members of the Board's staff held a virtual meeting with Triad and NNSA Field Office Personnel as part of a review of the site-wide atmospheric dispersion protocol.

Plutonium Facility–Fire Protection: On Monday, facility personnel held a fact-finding meeting to evaluate an incident last week where facility workers accidentally struck firewater piping with equipment causing a leak. The workers notified the appropriate facility personnel, and the leak was isolated promptly. Approximately 10 gallons of firewater was discharged. Maintenance personnel replaced the impacted piping, and the fire suppression system came back online the same evening. During the meeting, participants noted that this section of piping showed evidence of having been previously struck. Facility personnel are evaluating the adequacy of low clearance postings in low clearance areas with the potential for impacts to the fire suppression system.

Plutonium Facility–Glovebox Safety: On Tuesday, a glovebox glove and support ring disconnected and pushed into the glovebox while a worker was entering the gloves. The impacted worker and other personnel responded appropriately. Radiation control technicians detected substantial contamination on the worker's coveralls. There was no detectable skin contamination or evidence of an uptake. There were also no elevated airborne readings or any detectible spread of contamination into the room. There were two similar events two years ago where a worker pushed a glove and support ring into a box (see 9/25/2020, 7/24/2020 reports). Those events occurred with oval gloveports where this week's event was a round gloveport from the same manufacturer. While the cause of this separation is still under evaluation, it does not appear that excessive force at an angle was a factor as in the previous events. There have been no recurrences of oval gloveport separations following implementation of corrective actions from those events. Facility personnel are now evaluating how to safely perform this non-routine gloveport replacement using appropriate controls.

Radiation Protection: Last Thursday, workers at the Los Alamos Neutron Science Center (LANSCE) were performing repairs due to a vacuum issue. They were performing work on a valve outside of a posted high radiation area. The valve had not been surveyed as part of establishing the high radiation area, and a radiological control technician found it had a high dose rate after the work was in progress. The workers who had been in that room had their dosimeters read, and four workers received elevated exposures with the maximum dose being greater than 500 millirem over the course of the shift. Facility personnel paused work in that area pending further evaluation of radiological control practices.

Area G: On Wednesday, the Environmental Management Field Office authorized startup of corrugated metal pipe retrieval at Area G. N3B anticipates commencing next week.