

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 26, 2024

**TO:** Timothy J. Dwyer, Technical Director  
**FROM:** D. Gutowski, Resident Inspector  
**SUBJECT:** Los Alamos Activity Report for the Week Ending April 26, 2024

**Area G–Emergency Response:** On Tuesday, workers performing corrugated metal pipe (CMP) size reduction heard a loud pop and saw sparks coming from the crane they were using to move a cut CMP segment to a standard waste box. The crane lost power, and workers saw that the power cord for the crane had gotten caught in the lifting fixture and been damaged. The work crew performed a controlled exit from the Dome 375 Permacon and informed Operations Center personnel who entered the appropriate emergency response procedures, called the Emergency Operations Support Center, and called the Los Alamos Fire Department. Responding fire department personnel saw no evidence of any fire and turned the scene back over to N3B. N3B personnel developed and performed an emergency maintenance work package to restore power to the crane and lower the suspended load into a standard waste box. Later in the week, they completed repairs on the crane. Workers were aware that controlling the power cable and keeping it out of the way during lifting activities was a challenge. Following this event, personnel are evaluating engineering solutions to better secure the power cable, such as a cable festoon system.

**Plutonium Facility–Safety Basis:** The NNSA Office of Environment, Safety, and Health with concurrence from the NNSA Field Office and NNSA Central Technical authority approved the revised safety basis addendum supporting receipt and repackaging of large quantities of heat source plutonium material (see 9/8, 9/1/2023 reports). There were no additional conditions of approval or directed changes for this approval, and those affiliated with the conditional approval of the original addendum have been closed (see 4/1/2022 report). NNSA provided several “expectations” in their approval, some of which were retained from the 2022 approval and two of which are new for this revision. One new NNSA expectation is that Triad personnel perform an additional verification of compliance with the administrative control on combustible limits during this activity. This was inspired in part by the Board’s letter of August 11, 2022 providing advice on potential means to reduce risks during this activity.

**Federal Oversight:** The NNSA Field Office recently made tremendous progress in qualifying individuals for oversight roles. One facility representative assigned to the Plutonium Facility completed his final qualification walkthrough this week after passing his final oral board examination two weeks ago. Another facility representative assigned to the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Building completed his final oral board last week and is awaiting a facility walkthrough to complete final qualifications. A safety system oversight engineer assigned primarily to chemistry and waste facilities completed her final qualifying activity last week. That involved an independent assessment of the safety-class vehicle barriers at the Transuranic Waste Facility, which had one finding related to training of maintenance workers performing work on the safety-class systems. Finally, a fourth individual completed his final qualification oral board for quality assurance this week.