

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 12, 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: B. Broderick and C. H. Keilers, Jr.
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Report for Week Ending October 12, 2007

Broderick was off-site this week.

Federal Oversight: A team from the DOE Office of Independent Oversight (HS-64) will be here next week, preparing for their biennial review, scheduled for Oct 29th - Nov 9th (site rep weekly 7/13/07).

Seismic Criteria: LANL has submitted a two-year \$11M project execution plan for analyzing the effects of the increased seismic spectrum on nuclear facilities; the non-nuclear scope requires 5 years and \$9M. LANL is revising the plan based on only \$0.8M available in FY-08 (site rep weekly 8/3/07).

Transuranic Waste Operations: Waste characterization operations were suspended Wednesday after a WGI employee sustained a foot injury Monday; WGI and LANL have launched a Type-B like investigation. The line of responsibility is convoluted since WGI employees work at LANL under a contract administered by the DOE-EM Carlsbad Field Office; NNSA locally provides oversight.

Resumption of the WCRR repackaging facility is imminent but will be restricted to a small number of drums that have low potential for hydrogen retention. LANL will submit a justification for continued operation with controls intended to prevent processing drums with prohibited (e.g., sealed) containers.

Plutonium Facility (TA-55): TA-55 (PF-4) starts a two-week outage Monday, Oct 15th; a second outage is planned for December. Initial focus is on walk-downs, condition assessments, and drawing updates for some safety-related systems (e.g., ventilation, instrument air, chlorine, steam, wet-vacuum, and acidic waste). Other priorities include certifying fissile material handlers, implementing an integrated plan-of-the-day, and continuing criticality safety reviews. While these initial outages may be uneven, the outage approach should lay a framework for continuously improving TA-55 infrastructure.

Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Building Replacement Project: NNSA has provided LANL comments on the rev 0 draft preliminary documented safety analysis (PDSA); NNSA and LANL expect the rev 1 draft PDSA to be ready in November and to be a substantial improvement. Separately, NNSA has directed LANL to perform a ventilation system evaluation, per the Recommendation 04-2 implementation plan, using the rev 1 draft PDSA and DOE's Jan 2006 evaluation guidance.

Radioactive Liquid Waste Treatment Facility (RLWTF): As of this week, the acidic transuranic waste receipt tank is essentially full; the caustic waste receipt tank is at 36 %. Modifications to the treatment room continue. LANL is considering starting acidic waste treatment before caustic-related modifications are finished; concurrent modification and treatment would introduce new risks.

Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Building (CMR): On Aug 31st, LANL proposed interim technical safety requirements as a stop-gap for CMR operating to an out-dated safety basis (i.e., a 1998 basis for interim operation). Among the proposed changes are a new limiting condition for operation (LCO) for hot-cell safety features (e.g., interlocks, boot-seals), a new LCO for fire doors, an improved LCO for hot-cell wing ventilation, and improved administrative controls for toxic gas control and for operations center staffing (site rep weeklies 9/21/07, 8/3/07).