

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 19, 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR: Timothy Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: Jonathan Plaue, DNFSB Site Representative
SUBJECT: Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL)
Activity Report for Week Ending June 19, 2009

Hardened Engineering Test Facility: On June 16, 2009, the Livermore Site Office (LSO) approved the operation of the Hardened Engineering Test Facility as a Hazard Category 2 nonreactor nuclear facility. The approval also included concurrence that the laboratory's corrective action plan adequately addressed post-start findings identified during the federal Operational Readiness Review—a step consistent with the Office of Defense Program grant of startup authorization authority to LSO. The post-start findings involved: (1) completion of an equivalency for doors protecting two stairways per fire and building code, and (2) clarification of procedures related to some high airborne contamination situations, including worker response to a continuous air monitor alarm. Activities at the Hazard Category 2 level are expected in the next few months.

Radioactive and Hazardous Waste Management (RHWM) Facilities: On June 8, 2009, LSO received the report from the Laboratory Evaluation Board (LEB) Independent Assessment of Building 695 Safety Basis Implementation. The LEB was convened as a compensatory action in response to the glovebox over pressurization incident that occurred at the Decontamination and Waste Treatment Facility (DWTF) on December 23, 2008. The focus of the LEB was to evaluate the adequacy and implementation of Technical Safety Requirements (TSR) administrative controls. Overall, the LEB concluded that the facility was operated in an informal manner and that significant weaknesses were noted with the safety basis and its implementation, as well as with the following safety programs: Conduct of Operations, Radiation Protection Program, Feedback and Improvement, Industrial Hygiene, and Training. The LEB recommended near-term actions to perform an implementation verification review of the TSR, develop operating procedures, and develop an effective Feedback and Improvement program. Corrective actions resulting from the findings and observations are also expected to be integrated with those resulting from the earlier Incident Analysis, though the timeframe for completion of this effort has not been established.

This week, RHWM performed their second work permit meeting utilizing a revised work control process. Implementation of this revised process is one of the key compensatory measures supporting continued, limited operations at DWTF. The revised process is comparable to the process used in Superblock and is consistent with the laboratory's overall commitment to utilize a task-based approach to hazard identification, evaluation, and control.

Livermore Site Office: Many of the findings and observations documented in the LEB report also suggest a breakdown in the oversight performed by LSO. The LEB and the Incident Analysis were conducted by the laboratory and did not directly examine LSO. LSO now plans to perform a self-assessment of its oversight processes in July 2009. Self-assessment procedures and staffing assignments, which will likely include individuals from the Service Center to provide some independence, are still in development.