

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

September 6, 2002

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director  
**FROM:** C. H. Keilers, Jr.  
**SUBJECT:** Los Alamos Report for Week Ending September 6, 2002

The site rep was at Pantex this week to assess the status of laboratory support for Pantex operations.

**Recommendation 2000-2:** Last year, DOE and LANL identified five Phase II assessments to be conducted (site rep weekly 12/7/01). Three are complete, and two are remaining. Specifically, DOE has reported results for the Plutonium Facility (TA-55) fire alarm system; the Radiochemistry Laboratory (TA-48) fire sprinkler system; and the site-wide maintenance program. The TA-48 ventilation assessment was postponed and is now scheduled to start the end of this month. The site-wide fire alarm system is planned to be reviewed when sufficient progress is made on the partial system replacement project. That assessment is now anticipated in December.

**Fire Protection:** The completed DOE/LANL Phase II assessments identified weaknesses in the LANL program for inspection, testing, and maintenance for fire protection systems (site rep weekly 6/14/02). While these weaknesses do not constitute an imminent hazard, LANL has prepared and is executing a corrective action plan. It appears progress is being made. LANL has completed an initial review of applicable inspection and maintenance procedures, identified improvements, and implemented compensatory measures. LANL has also developed a new surveillance procedure to improve and standardize fire protection inspections at the facility and institutional levels. Specific deficiencies found are being entered into an issue tracking system. LANL is also beginning to track mean-time-to-repair for fire protection impairments in nuclear facilities. The site rep believes that these issues are receiving and continue to warrant close management attention.

**Integrated Safety Management (ISM):** On June 14th, LANL issued their investigation report on the January liquid chlorine dioxide explosion in a non-nuclear facility (site rep weeklies 1/11/02, 6/28/02). The LANL investigation determined that the root cause was performance of the experiment without adequately following the LANL safe work practices, which is the LANL mechanism for implementing ISM into programmatic work.

The site rep believes that LANL conducted a technically thorough investigation. While corrective actions have been underway since the incident occurred, to the site rep's knowledge, a consolidated corrective action plan has yet to be issued. It remains unclear that a complete set of corrective actions has been identified and the extent to which they are being pursued. This likely has implications on both nuclear and non-nuclear programmatic work.

**Facility Operations:** LANL has a facility revitalization project with objectives that include improving productivity, integrating facility management, and optimizing safe, secure, cost-effective operations and maintenance. As part of this effort, LANL is close to implementing a more centralized management structure. A key element is that facility managers will report to an institutional lead manager. Prior to 1995, LANL had such a central organization. LANL is now trying to gain the benefits of centralized management while retaining the responsiveness of a distributed organization. Under the new system, roles and responsibilities will be defined in facility service agreements. Divisions will remain responsible for some elements, such as the authorization basis. Implementation is expected to begin next month and continue through the next year.