

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 11, 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR: Timothy Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: Jonathan Plaue, DNFSB Site Representative
SUBJECT: LLNL Activity Report for Week Ending December 11, 2009

Livermore Site Office (LSO): On December 2, 2009, LSO temporarily reassigned responsibility for oversight of the Radioactive and Hazardous Waste Management (RHWM) nuclear facilities to the operations team currently supporting the Superblock. This action represents one of the corrective actions resulting from the self-assessment of oversight for RHWM performed in response to the December 23, 2008, glovebox incident (see weekly report dated October 16, 2009). The reassignment, which will be evaluated in six months, was made with the intent of facilitating a rigorous and consistent approach to oversight of all of the nuclear facilities at the laboratory. Under this operations team arrangement, issues involving RHWM remain the responsibility of the Assistant Manager for Environmental Stewardship and issues involving Superblock remain the responsibility of the Assistant Manager for National Security Implementation. The reassignment memo does not discuss criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of this reassignment and determining its permanence.

Thus far, one of the improvements resulting from this reassignment has been a Safety System Oversight engineer self-initiated facility access training for RHWM. Currently, there are only three other LSO employees (current and former Facility Representatives) with unescorted access to the RHWM nuclear facilities. Outside of the Facility Representative program, LSO does not formally identify the need for subject matter experts or other oversight personnel to maintain access to any of the nuclear facilities. As a result, oversight activities requiring facility presence are dependent on the support of either the laboratory contractor or a Facility Representative.

Management: On December 8, 2009, LSO transmitted the fiscal year 2009 Performance Evaluation Report for the laboratory contractor. Overall, the laboratory earned 88 percent of the available fee and successfully met conditions required for eligibility of another year of contract award term. In the area of operations, which contains many of the elements related to safety in the nuclear facilities, the laboratory scored a “good” on the adjectival rating system for essential measures (the second best available score) and obtained 96 percent of the fee associated with stretch measures. For operations, LSO noted as a concern the lengthy curtailment of operations resulting from the B695 glovebox incident and its associated impacts on regulatory agreements.

Radiography Facility: On Thursday, the laboratory declared the annual update to the documented safety analysis and technical safety requirements implemented. The annual update downgraded five safety significant controls to a designation of equipment important to safety (see weekly report dated September 18, 2009). The laboratory plans to use this occasion to pilot a process for an Independent Verification Review (IVR). The pilot IVR plan was developed using the Department of Energy’s draft *Guide for Performance of Independent Verification Reviews of Safety Basis Controls*. LSO has incentivized the performance of three IVRs for this fiscal year.