

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 30, 2012

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** T. J. Dwyer, Technical Director  
**FROM:** R.T. Davis and R.K. Verhaagen  
**SUBJECT:** Los Alamos Report for Week Ending November 30, 2012

Kevin Smith recently announced that he will be leaving LANL as the site office manager to become the new manager of the Office of River Protection at the Hanford site. Juan Griego will be acting in his place until a new site office manager is assigned.

**Transuranic Waste Operations – Safety Basis:** In March 2012, the site office manager approved a major revision to the safety basis for transuranic waste operations at Technical Area-54, the Area G Basis for Interim Operation (BIO). This document will replace the current safety basis that was originally approved in 2003. Following approval, LANL moved forward with implementation plans for the new document; however, there have been significant delays and Area G management now estimates that implementation will not be complete until the second half of Fiscal Year 2013. In the interim, LANL is developing a safety basis strategy (expected in January 2013) that details plans to revise the Area G BIO to improve and simplify this new safety basis. These changes, which will be reviewed and approved by the site office, are expected to help simplify implementation at Area G.

The site office also provided direction to LANL this week to address and respond to the Board letter dated November 19, 2012, that identifies inconsistencies in the Area G BIO. LANL is requested to evaluate the issues identified and enter the Potential Inadequacy of the Safety Analysis process where appropriate and to provide a response on all issues to the site office by December 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Activity-level Work Planning Oversight:** This week, the site office Assistant Manager for Field Operations issued direction to all Field Operations personnel regarding their responsibilities for oversight of activity-level work planning. This direction cited DNFSB/TECH-37 and the Accident Investigation Board's report for the contamination event at the Los Alamos Neutron Science Center as examples of the importance of proper and diligent oversight of work at the activity level. The direction requires that all Facility Representative Team personnel complete at least one monthly operational awareness assessment of facility work at the experimental or activity level. These assessments are to be aimed at all aspects of planning and executing the activity being observed, including: work document development and review; coordination of work scheduling; pre-job briefings; work release; performance of work; work package closeout; and post-job brief. This direction also requires all Safety Engineering Team personnel to consider and incorporate this strategy into their formal assessments and operational awareness activities as appropriate.

**Weapons Engineering Tritium Facility (WETF):** In response to a series of formality of operations issues and recent site office direction to make improvements in this area (see 11/9/12 weekly), the WETF Facility Operations Director (FOD) determined that corrective actions have not been effective at ensuring the desired level of reliable nuclear operations. Based on this determination, the FOD declared the lack of effective corrective actions to be a recurring event and issued an Occurrence Report identifying this fact. Senior LANL management have indicated that the root causes associated with these recurring issues and adequate resources to address them need to be identified and in place prior to completing startup preparations. WETF management is developing a plan for how corrective actions and startup preparations will be integrated.