

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 15, 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR: Steven Stokes, Acting Technical Director
FROM: Jonathan Plaue, DNFSB Site Representative
SUBJECT: LLNL Activity Report for Week Ending February 15, 2013

Nuclear Material Packaging: On February 12, 2013, the manager of the Plutonium Facility issued a timely order to fissile material handlers regarding packaging requirements for high decay heat items (i.e., items containing plutonium-238). The timely order mandates the use of the new SAVY-4000 containers as a tertiary container for material transfers between rooms in the facility and for storage in the vaults. Facility personnel will establish a SAVY container(s) exclusively for room-to-room transfers.

Issuance of the timely order brings LLNL into better alignment with common packaging practices elsewhere in the complex. Further, the timely order prevents the immediate generation of high-risk packages from ongoing activities involving plutonium-238 that would otherwise require subsequent repackaging to support full implementation of Department of Energy Manual 441.1-1, *Nuclear Material Packaging Manual*. The timely order also begins the transition to routine use of the SAVY containers in the facility for all in-scope nuclear materials, which the contractor plans to implement formally through a revision to the Facility Safety Plan, currently scheduled for April 2013.

Livermore Field Office (LFO): On February 7, 2013, the LFO Manager issued a letter to the Deputy Laboratory Director regarding the fundamental lessons that can be learned from the security incident at the Y-12 National Security Complex. The National Nuclear Security Administration learned the following fundamental lessons, which are applicable to safety and security:

- (1) Make no assumptions,
- (2) Develop a questioning attitude and pay attention to the details, and
- (3) Embrace full and open communications

In the letter, LFO focused on the application of these lessons to the contractor's response to the Board's letter dated August 30, 2012, regarding the development, review, and approval of safety control strategies. LFO noted that the contractor's response failed to provide an open and self-critical examination of the safety basis process. As a result, LFO requested that the contractor: (1) reflect on the lessons and review their response to the Board's letter, (2) specifically address the lessons as part of the planned assessments of the safety basis development process, and (3) ensure that the Contractor Assurance System is fully implemented to affect continuous improvement in the area of nuclear safety. As part of their response, the contractor is looking to add elements of safety culture to the review plan for the Functional Management Review of nuclear safety, currently planned for April.