

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 28, 2013

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** S.A. Stokes, Acting Technical Director  
**FROM:** R.T. Davis and R.K. Verhaagen  
**SUBJECT:** Los Alamos Report for Week Ending June 28, 2013

Staff members P. Foster and A. Gwal were on site this week to review the Technical Area 55 electrical distribution system and the LANL electrical safety program.

**Plutonium Facility – Criticality Safety:** On Thursday, the Laboratory Director paused programmatic activities at the Plutonium Facility. The pause was directed based on issues identified during procedural and criticality safety reviews and findings from recent assessments. The Director communicated to all LANL personnel the importance of ensuring procedures and operational processes are being executed appropriately. Additionally, the memorandum emphasized the importance for employees to raise concerns and for leaders to take action on those concerns. The Principal Associate Director for Weapons Programs and the senior management team have been tasked to evaluate the way work is executed and to determine what process and procedure improvements are needed as well as determining a path forward to continuous improvement. Individual operations at the Plutonium Facility will be resumed once necessary updates and enhancements have been achieved.

The procedure and criticality safety implementation reviews that led, in part, to the pause of operations continued this week at the Plutonium Facility. These reviews have identified a number of procedural issues and the need for clarification and improvement of criticality safety controls. As a part of this review, Plutonium Facility personnel also identified a safe drawer with dimensions that are not in compliance with the Criticality Safety Limit Approval (CSLA). The drawer dimensions are identified as an engineered feature that should have been verified as a part of implementing the CSLA. This issue resulted in a criticality safety infraction.

**Stage 3 Fire Restrictions:** Due to the ongoing drought and the current extreme fire danger level in the area, LANL has entered stage 3 fire restrictions. Entering stage 3 fire restrictions limits activities that increase the risk of starting a fire and have a direct impact on LANL explosives testing. Additionally, access to most recreational areas for walking, hiking, jogging, biking and similar activities is prohibited. The fire restrictions are currently expected to be in effect through August 3.

**Safety Basis:** LANL submitted a revised Evaluation of the Safety of the Situation (ESS) following a site-wide assessment for new air service between Los Alamos and Albuquerque (see 5/10/13 weekly). The revised ESS indicates that the increased air traffic resulted in positive Unreviewed Safety Questions for Technical Area 55, the RANT shipping facility, Area G, and the Nuclear Environmental Sites. The ESS indicates that there is not an imminent hazard associated with the increase in air traffic in the vicinity of LANL and that the affected DSAs will be updated as necessary to reflect this increased risk during the next annual update.

**Area G – Safety Basis:** In March 2012, the field office approved a major revision to the Area G safety basis to replace the current safety basis that was originally approved in 2003. However, this document was not implemented in the field. Instead, LANL developed a strategy to revise the new safety basis to account for the reduction of material at risk and to improve and simplify the document. This week, LANL re-submitted this new safety basis to the field office for approval. Following field office approval, LANL plans to implement the new safety basis by the end of the fiscal year.