

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

August 9, 2013

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** S.A. Stokes, Acting Technical Director  
**FROM:** R.T. Davis and R.K. Verhaagen  
**SUBJECT:** Los Alamos Report for Week Ending August 9, 2013

**Criticality Safety:** This week, LANL submitted a revision to its system description SD130, *Nuclear Criticality Program*, to the field office for review and approval. The revision to SD130 has been approved by the Laboratory Director and is aimed at relieving the Nuclear Criticality Safety Group (NCSG) from the burden of having to review procedure changes that are editorial in nature. This will allow LANL's limited NCSG resources to more effectively use their time to perform the numerous criticality safety evaluations and procedure change reviews they have been charged with as a result of procedure walkdowns during the Director's pause in Plutonium Facility operations. The revision also defines what constitutes an editorial change and clarifies that it is the responsibility of the Operations Responsible Manager to ensure procedures impacting criticality safety are reviewed by the NCSG prior to use. Although additional changes to SD130 are planned, this revision was expedited in order to support Plutonium Facility resumption activities.

LANL also submitted its assessment report of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter FY13 Nuclear Criticality Safety Program metrics to the field office for review. The assessment aims to measure continuous program improvement, efficient utilization of limited NCSG resources, and alignment of NCSG and Associate Director, Nuclear and High Hazard Operation (ADNHHO) work priorities. The report identified that the criticality safety staff has seen a decrease in their workload during this quarter, but anticipates a large increase in their workload for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter as annual process walkdowns come due. Additionally, the assessment concludes that the metrics show an increased alignment of work priorities between ADNHHO and the NCSG.

**Plutonium Facility:** Plutonium Facility management declared a Potential Inadequacy in the Safety Analysis following a field office assessment of the facility Instrument Air System that identified a less than adequate surveillance procedure. A surveillance performed to ensure the Facility Control System will secure ventilation in certain upset conditions does not perform a complete System Function Test as required by the Technical Safety Requirements.

**Chemistry and Metallurgy Research (CMR) Building – Confinement Vessel Disposition (CVD) Project:** The field office approved a page change to the CMR safety basis that addresses comments from a field office ancillary review of the CVD project (see 6/14/13 weekly). This approval represents the first of three actions that must be completed prior to commencing a Federal Operational Readiness Review and subsequent startup (see 7/26/13 weekly). The Independent Verification Review of the page change is scheduled to begin August 21, 2013.

**Weapons Engineering Tritium Facility (WETF):** The field office transmitted a letter to ADNHHO directing action on multiple outstanding WETF recommendations for safety basis changes. The letter identified that safety basis deficiencies are contributing to the inability of WETF to resume operations in order to reduce its legacy tritium inventory and to support its national security mission. The letter directs LANL to resolve safety basis issues identified by the field office and notes that a "step-improvement" in the WETF safety basis is needed to support startup activities.