

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

January 24, 2014

MEMORANDUM FOR: S.A. Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: R.T. Davis, R.K. Verhaagen, and J.W. Plaué
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Report for Week Ending January 24, 2014

Federal Oversight: This week, the acting field office manager announced that on an interim basis, the Assistant Managers for Safety Operations and Field Operations will be combined under a single manager. To support this larger group, NNSA is pursuing a deputy position that will be initially filled as a local detail assignment. In addition, the acting manager identified that an expression of interest will be released for a detail assignment as the senior safety and technical advisor position. This position is expected to be permanently assigned in the near future. The field office also released a report that determined the need for 15 facility representatives with a current staffing of 11.

Confinement Vessel Disposition (CVD) Project: Last Friday, LANL submitted to the field office for review and approval a corrective action plan for the CVD Operational Readiness Review completed in October 2013. LANL personnel conducted a causal analysis in order to inform the identified corrective actions (see 11/22/13 weekly). Of note, the causal analysis attributed a large number of the findings to management guidance and expectations not being clearly defined, understood, or enforced. LANL management is tracking to closure all pre-start and post-start findings using the Performance Feedback and Improvement Tracking System. All pre-start findings are currently scheduled to be complete by April 15, 2014. Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Building management evaluated all post-start findings and concluded that none pose risks that would require additional compensatory measures or mitigating actions to support startup of CVD operations.

Weapons Engineering Tritium Facility (WETF): On Wednesday, LANL personnel briefed the field office on the status of their efforts to disposition legacy items containing tritium. WETF personnel noted that their cataloging effort revealed more than 1100 items requiring disposition. As part of this effort, workers photographed, analyzed, and researched each item in order to support binning into one of several disposition solution packages. LANL plans to disposition about 150 tritium items, containing a total of less than 10 g of tritium, in the remainder of fiscal year 2014. As explained during the briefing, LANL will be unable to achieve substantial inventory reductions until the facility completes readiness activities and receives field office authorization to resume operations, which is currently scheduled to occur in the next few months. WETF personnel will then need to remove tritium from the Tritium Load-in Glovebox to facilitate installation of new mercury removal traps and load-out equipment. This equipment is required to process many of the bulk-tritium containing items into a form acceptable for shipping to the Savannah River Site. Design of the traps, which may require additional safety basis changes and readiness activities, is currently underway.

Last Friday, LANL submitted to the field office a revised Justification for Continued Operations (JCO) regarding the Oxygen Monitoring System (OMS) (see 1/3/14 weekly). The revised JCO continues to propose a monthly surveillance and calibration check of the system as a compensatory measure for the observed decrease in OMS sensor reliability. The JCO notes that the system would not be declared operable until WETF management ensures the sensors will remain in calibration for at least 30 days. To-date, WETF personnel have performed two 30-day calibration checks and observed calibration issues with several sensors during each check. WETF engineers are attempting to troubleshoot and resolve these problems. An operable OMS will be needed to support the disposition of legacy items discussed above.