

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 13, 2014

MEMORANDUM FOR: S.A. Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: R.K. Verhaagen and J.W. Plaue
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Report for Week Ending June 13, 2014

DNFSB Staff Activity: J.C. McComb observed resumption activities at the Plutonium Facility. D.J. Campbell performed site familiarization activities. On Wednesday and Thursday, R.K. Verhaagen observed causal analysis activities performed by the DOE Accident Investigation Board for the radiological release event at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant.

Area G–Operations: On Friday, Area G management paused all transuranic waste movements until a safety stand-down briefing is completed next Monday. Observations by NNSA Facility Representatives indicating procedural adherence issues, including improper response to a dropped Standard Waste Box, triggered the stand-down.

Plutonium Facility–Criticality Safety: Facility and program personnel entered a period of high tempo of activities in support of resumption. During the past week, personnel conducted a total of at least 12 Annual Operating Reviews and Independent Verification Reviews.

Confinement Vessel Disposition (CVD) Project: On Tuesday, the field office granted LANL approval to commence CVD nuclear operations. On Wednesday, CVD personnel successfully transferred the first sphere from TA-55 to Wing 9. CVD personnel anticipate commencing cleanout activities next week.

Weapons Engineering Tritium Facility (WETF): On Wednesday, WETF management briefed the field office on the status of task force activities associated with the Oxygen Monitoring System (OMS). Management reported that procurements were underway for new sensors, cables, and modules and that testing was scheduled to be completed by July 2, 2014. Based on those actions, management anticipates submitting a revised Evaluation of the Safety of the Situation/Justification for Continued Operations (ESS/JCO) to the field office by July 14 and commencing contractor readiness activities by July 21. Field office management reiterated their skepticism regarding any attempt to declare the OMS operable without a successful 30-day demonstration. The Site Representatives note that an approved ESS/JCO does not exist for the potential inadequacy of the safety analysis declared on the OMS in November 2013 (see 11/29/13 weekly). In some instances, LANL's approach of combining a JCO with the ESS tends to result in delayed submittals.

Emergency Management: LANL recently issued the after-action report for the April 17, 2014, nuclear criticality exercise at TA-55 (see 4/18/14 weekly). The report notes four findings and seven opportunities for improvement (OFI) to be screened for potential corrective actions. The OFIs include:

- Operations in the Facility Incident Command (FIC) lacked formality, including personnel not following checklists, providing sporadic briefings, and confusion with seating and phones
- At least 12 individuals walked past injured victims without offering assistance
- Radcon technicians were not wearing proper personnel protective equipment (PPE)
- The FIC did not provide timely PPE advice to fire department, which delayed response to patients
- Emergency Management did not receive timely notification of the event
- The TA-55 Operations Center does not have a comprehensive phone list for the FIC