

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 19, 2014

MEMORANDUM FOR: S.A. Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: R.K. Verhaagen and J.W. Plaue
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Report for Week Ending December 19, 2014

DNFSB Staff Activity: J.W. Plaue was at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) this week to assist with a site familiarization visit by the new DNFSB staff LLNL cognizant engineer.

Plutonium Facility–Resumption Activities: This week, the field office approved a LANL request to remove the T-Base 2 machining operation from the scope of the Evaluation of the Safety of the Situation/Justification for Continued Operations (ESS/JCO) regarding the potential for criticality due to firewater flooding (see 5/23/14 weekly). The LANL request identified that all required actions established in the ESS/JCO approval letter necessary to remove the ESS/JCO compensatory measures had been completed. These actions included field office approval and LANL implementation of a comprehensive Criticality Safety Evaluation Document.

RANT Shipping Facility: On Wednesday, facility management declared a potential inadequacy in the safety analysis (PISA) for the RANT Shipping Facility. Safety basis personnel were following the new information process in response to an issue raised in the Board's December 9, 2014, report to NNSA detailing deficiencies in the facility's approved, but not yet implemented, Documented Safety Analysis (DSA). The Board's letter questioned whether the RANT Shipping Facility's seismic analysis demonstrates that the structure meets its credited seismic performance criteria. The same analysis is cited as demonstrating adequate seismic performance in the currently implemented Basis for Interim Operations. The LANL calculation supporting this analysis concludes that the facility does not meet its safety basis credited seismic performance. RANT engineering and safety basis personnel are evaluating this information through the Unreviewed Safety Question Determination (USQD) process. Today, the field office transmitted a letter to LANL rescinding approval of the DSA and directing the facility remain in cold standby until authorized by the field office to change modes.

Waste Characterization, Reduction, and Repackaging Facility (WCRRF): This week, WCRRF personnel identified that a procedural change for processing waste in the WCRRF glovebox was made without an adequate USQD being performed. The procedural change was made over two years ago and removed the requirements to stop waste processing and inform management if, among other things, Class 1 oxidizers (such as nitrates), flammable metals or pyrophoric materials were encountered. The currently implemented Basis for Interim Operations does not allow processing of these types of materials. The WCRRF is in cold standby.

Confinement Vessel Disposition (CVD) Project: CVD personnel completed de-mating the robotic arm and glovebox workstation from the first processed confinement vessel (see 10/24/14 weekly). Port covers have been installed in place of the robotic arm and workstation. These actions followed procedural and process changes needed to enhance contamination controls within the enclosure when de-mating these items. The confinement vessel will remain in this safe configuration within the enclosure until the New Year when it will be assayed and shipped to Area G for final processing and disposition.