

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 13, 2018

MEMORANDUM FOR: Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director
FROM: J.W. Plaue and D. Gutowski, Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for Week Ending July 13, 2018

Management: Transition activities for the laboratory management and operations contract commenced this week. Triad National Security, LLC will take over management of the laboratory from Los Alamos Nuclear Security, LLC after a transition period of not less than 120 days.

Plutonium Facility–Infrastructure: Facility personnel have started work to address the degraded glovebox spool piece in the aqueous chloride processing area (see 11/17/2017 report). A newly designed collapsible replacement piece will be installed. The design eliminates the need to move adjacent gloveboxes during the replacement. A similar degraded spool piece remains in the heat source plutonium area where interim confinement is still being provided by tape (see 10/3/2014 report). It is also scheduled to be replaced with a similar new spool piece.

Area G: At the completion of the eleventh week of operations under the new contract, Area G activities remain limited. Supporting programs and functions are also operating at a rudimentary level as N3B works to develop their own infrastructure. For example, personnel are using radios and mobile phones while new telecommunications circuits are established to replace removed land lines; however, signal coverage is incomplete and the lack of network circuits means that not all operations center staff can print documents. Training and qualification status is being tracked manually with uncertainty on the availability of courses as they come due. Respiratory protection is required for a variety of activities including some abnormal responses and routine operations such as vegetation and pest control; however, the required medical screening, training, and fit test programs are not yet established resulting in limited personnel that are certified to use a respirator. In the Resident Inspectors' opinion, this development of duplicate infrastructure stems from a relationship between LANS and N3B that is inconsistent with similar arrangements at other multi-contractor DOE sites where the management and operations contractor provide many of these services to other entities.

Confinement Vessel Disposition Project: Personnel moved the eighth confinement vessel from the Plutonium Facility yard to the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Building for processing.

Weapons Engineering Tritium Facility: Facility personnel removed the Halon fire suppression system from the operations center (see 11/17/2017 report). The system had reached its end of life and replacement components were no longer available from the manufacturer. The system has not served a credited safety function since 2016 and will not be replaced. The safety-significant wet-pipe sprinkler system continues to provide credited fire protection for the facility.

RANT Shipping Facility: On Thursday, LANL management submitted an amended startup notification report to the NNSA Field Office that includes restart of the RANT Shipping Facility with a proposed NNSA readiness review. The projected startup date is mid-December 2018.