

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 9, 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 November 9, 2018

DNFSB Staff Activity: On Friday, P. J. Migliorini conducted a teleconference with N3B and EM Field Office personnel to discuss the results of the staff's review of the safety control strategy for mobile loading operations at Area G. K. L. Sullivan was at the laboratory providing resident inspector support with emphases on observing conduct at facility operations centers and work release practices.

Management: On Wednesday, the new LANL Director conducted an all-hands briefing. Of note, he discussed four specific actions that Triad had committed to NNSA: (1) delivering an integrated plan for mission activities at the Plutonium Facility within 6 months; (2) assessing outstanding criticality safety evaluations within 6 months; (3) revalidating capital project baselines within 6 months; and (4) training first line managers of hazardous operations areas within a year. He also announced immediate focus on improving operational practices, the waste cycle, human capital, and project execution. Triad is also developing a common lab agenda that focuses on simultaneous excellence between operations and mission execution, while enhancing confidence from the community.

Plutonium Facility–Readiness: On Monday, a 13-person contractor readiness assessment team commenced their review of Uranium Electrolytic Decontamination (UED) operations. The operation is primarily conducted in two gloveboxes and uses an electrolytic process to remove plutonium surface contamination from uranium parts. The operation also includes a solution processing step where actinides are precipitated from the electrolyte, filtered, and dried prior to disposal. Overall, UED provides clean uranium parts that can then be converted to oxide for eventual transfer to facilities in Tennessee. This week, the team conducted interviews and observed operational demonstrations including a drill. They plan to complete their assessment next week.

Plutonium Facility–Operations: This week, Plutonium Facility personnel completed the limited aqueous nitrate cement fixation campaign (see 9/14/2018 report). The third and final drum containing cemented legacy radioactive waste solution is curing over the weekend.

Plutonium Facility–Glovebox Safety: On Thursday, Plutonium Facility personnel held a post-job review after a glovebox glove apparently breached during a maintenance activity. Post-job personnel noted that the worker appropriately detected the contamination on his inner glove during self-monitoring at the glovebox and that response by radiological control technicians was excellent. There were no other indications of contamination. Notably, glovebox safety personnel had recently conducted a sharps review for this maintenance activity. Next week, they plan to examine the glove and reassess the activity for sharps hazards.

Transuranic Waste Management: The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant resumed receiving shipments this week allowing departure of the trailer that Plutonium Facility personnel had previously mobile loaded with 21 transuranic waste containers (see 10/19/2018 report).