

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 27, 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR: Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director

FROM: J.W. Plaue and D. Gutowski, Resident Inspectors

SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for Week Ending March 27, 2020

COVID-19 Impacts: Triad's Emergency Operations Center remains in monitoring mode with its pandemic advisory team meeting as needed. On Tuesday, emergency management personnel largely transitioned to virtual operations to reduce personnel in the Emergency Operations Center. Overall, about three quarters of Triad personnel are now teleworking. Nuclear facilities began reducing operations this week.

- The Weapons Engineering Tritium Facility and Chemistry and Metallurgy Research building transitioned to minimal operations. Both facilities are maintaining reduced staff for limited days to perform surveillances and other required activities.
- Transuranic waste operations at the Transuranic Waste Facility, the Plutonium Facility, and the RANT Shipping Facility remain active. Activities include non-destructive assay and flammable gas headspace measurements in support of certification for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), as well as preparation of payloads for possible continued shipments to WIPP. A shipment of drums departed RANT for WIPP on Tuesday.
- The Plutonium Facility has reduced programmatic activities with additional social distancing and cleaning protocols in place. Maintenance and some construction activities are also continuing.
- Area G operations transitioned to near minimal on Thursday. N3B personnel will be completing all required daily and weekly rounds for safety and environmental compliance. Equipment maintenance activities will also continue.
- The EM and NNSA Field Offices are nearly exclusively teleworking. NNSA has begun planning for resumption of operations once warranted by conditions.

Radiological Laboratory Utility Office Building: Two weeks ago, Triad responded to the NNSA Field Office's request for a prioritized strategy for resolution of the fire protection deficiencies in the building (see 2/21/2020 report). The strategy provides options for physical remedies as well as administrative variances and permanent exemptions. Triad emphasized that the most important element is to repair the five stairwells in the facility to meet occupant life-safety code—an effort currently expected to take at least another year. Triad's proposed prioritization of the other deficiencies include: (1) restore occupant life-safety impacted fire barriers as much as feasible; (2) provide compliant and reliable operations for the fire suppression system; (3) address property protection requirements; (4) address other code compliance issues; and (5) address lower priority deficiencies in the central utility building. Triad estimated overall completion of the effort to require four to five years depending on funding sources and profiles.

Transuranic Waste–Readiness: Last Friday, the NNSA Field Office approved Triad's request to credit activities at the RANT Shipping Facility to forgo a formal readiness review for mobile loading of transuranic waste at TA-55 (see 12/13/2019 report).

Area G–Safety Basis: Last Thursday, N3B transmitted to the EM Field Office for approval its evaluation of the safety of the situation concerning discrepancies in waste container aisle spacing (see 1/10/2020 report). N3B performed calculations for pool fuel fires demonstrating that the potential consequences from the as-found configuration do not change the currently accepted risk profile.