

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 24, 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 April 24, 2020

COVID-19 Impacts: Staffing levels and work activities remain similar to last week.

Developments this week include:

- Triad management continued development of COVID-19 related institutional command media and tabletop reviews of programmatic activities in the Plutonium Facility in anticipation of increasing operations.
- Triad personnel continued transuranic waste characterization and movement activities. They completed a shipment of waste from the Plutonium Facility to the Transuranic Waste Facility on Tuesday. On Thursday, they completed a subsequent shipment from the Transuranic Waste Facility to the RANT Shipping Facility in preparation of resuming shipments to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant.

Plutonium Facility–Fire Protection: On Monday, Triad personnel completed an implementation verification review for safety basis changes associated with new diesel backup generators for the electric fire-water pumps (see 1/31/2020 report). There were no findings from the review. The generators now provide credited backup power to the pumps, which allows for additional operations flexibility. This is because required actions now only need to be taken when both a diesel fire water pump and an electric pump or its associated backup generator are inoperable. Prior to installation of the generators, the actions were required when only the diesel fire water pump was inoperable.

Federal Oversight: Last Friday, the NNSA Field Office issued an independent assessment report from their review of Triad’s Emergency Management Program. The review was conducted last August and September and used new criteria and review approach documents developed using guidance from the DOE/NNSA Office of Emergency Operations and Policy. The review identified one finding related to radiological control technician adherence to contamination control protocols at the hospital.

Readiness: On Thursday, N3B personnel telephonically convened their Joint Evaluation Team to review the proposed level of readiness review for the size reduction of the Corrugated Metal Pipes. N3B plans to install a manual roller conveyer and a diesel-powered hydraulic shear at the Dome 375 Permacon to enable movement of the pipes to be cut into sections appropriate to fit into a Standard Waste Box. After limited discussion, the team approved a recommendation for contractor and federal readiness assessments to be conducted in parallel in consideration of the COVID-19 circumstances. N3B will be submitting their proposal to the EM Field Office for approval.

On Tuesday, Triad sent their startup notification report for the third quarter to the NNSA Field Office for approval. Restart of aqueous nitrate operations is on hold for the calendar year; the projected startup of the venting of the Flanged Tritium Waste Containers at Area G is now summer 2020; and the projected startup of the Radiological Laboratory Utility Office Building as a hazard category 3 nuclear facility is July 2021.