

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 2, 2021

TO: Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director
FROM: Daniel B. Bullen, Ph.D., P.E., Cognizant Engineer
SUBJECT: Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) Report for March 2021

COVID-19 Safety Pause: During the week of March 8–12, 2021, Sandia Field Office (SFO) and National Technology and Engineering Solutions of Sandia, LLC (NTESS) staff participated in a COVID-19 Safety Pause as directed by the Department of Energy (DOE). SFO noted that the purpose of the pause was to review and discuss the DOE COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan. SFO Staff also discussed safety protocols, challenges associated with SFO’s current COVID-19 posture and protocols, best practices and lessons learned, and current vaccine information. SFO completed these discussions at the individual group level and management team level. On March 11, 2021, the SFO Manager conducted an all-hands teleconference to discuss the DOE plan, results from the Safety Pause, and to answer employee questions. NTESS conducted similar meetings and discussions of the DOE Safety Plan as part of the Safety Pause. SNL and SFO continue to operate under Phase 2 of their recovery and re-entry plans while encouraging maximum telework.

Annual Full-Scale Emergency Exercise: On March 10, 2021, NTESS staff executed a full-scale emergency exercise at Technical Area V (TA-V). NTESS stated that the purpose of the exercise was to test and validate the effectiveness of the emergency response organization through implementation of the site's emergency plan and procedures and DOE Order 151.1D, *Comprehensive Emergency Management System*. In addition, NTESS evaluated the ability of SNL’s Emergency Management team and Kirtland Fire and Emergency Services (KFES) to respond to and mitigate an emergency incident with injury at an Emergency Planning Hazards Assessment Facility/Defense Nuclear Facility. The exercise scenario included a medical emergency, vehicle accident, and a fire in a machine shop building with three injured TA-V personnel. In response to the emergency, KFES equipment and personnel arrived at TA-V in a timely manner; established an Incident Command (IC); quickly assessed, stabilized, and transported the injured personnel for medical treatment; and extinguished the structure fire. NTESS terminated the exercise after all field responses (fire extinguishment; patient assessment/ treatment/ transport) were completed. NTESS noted that this exercise, which was safely completed in a COVID-19 environment, was the first exercise completed following the transition of key emergency response capabilities (e.g., IC responsibilities) to KFES. NTESS evaluators noted in their preliminary conclusions that all 22 objectives tested in the exercise were “met” with zero findings, one deficiency, and twenty opportunities for improvement. The After-Action Report for this exercise is due April 24, 2021, and the Corrective Action Plan is due June 8, 2021.

TA-V Fire Alarm System Secondary Power Supply/Public Address (PA) System Installation: On August 11, 2020, NTESS Fire Protection personnel identified a condition in which fire notification appliances (e.g., horns, strobes, bells, etc.) for the Sandia Pulsed Reactor Facility (SPRF) did not meet requirements for secondary power. In a subsequent extent-of-condition (EOC) review on October 29, 2020, NTESS Fire Protection personnel identified the same condition in other TA-V buildings. NTESS resolved the fire alarm system secondary power supply issue for the SPRF in December 2020 and for the remainder of the TA-V non-nuclear facilities in February 2021. As part of the EOC review, NTESS also identified the need for a PA system for TA-V, the installation of which is currently underway.