

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

September 23, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR: Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director
FROM: A. Boussouf and D. Gutowski, Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for Week Ending September 23, 2022

Area G: On Tuesday, N3B management authorized resumption of field activities in Area G with the exception of corrugated metal pipe retrieval (see 9/16/2022 report). During the pause, facility personnel held safety briefings and reviewed procedures to assure that job hazards were all fully identified and integrated. Authorized work resumed deliberately under senior supervisory watches. The job hazards for corrugated metal pipe retrieval are still under evaluation.

Plutonium Facility–Decontamination and Decommissioning (D&D): There were two recent issues identified during D&D activities in a laboratory room that is being repurposed. Both events involved a hood that is being decontaminated. Glove changes and decontamination activities in this hood led to non-compliance with transient combustible controls and work control practices for activities during material inventory. The hood has no allowance for transient combustibles, meaning any items such as gloves or waste bags must be removed or containerized unless attended. Glovebox gloves from the changeout and waste from decontamination were left in the hood. Access to this room is currently restricted due to radiological concerns with the waste bag. Fact finding meetings this week related to these events identified several areas for improvement. Many different organizations are involved in D&D, and the communications between them to ensure that all requirements are met was a major item noted for improvement. Also, glovebox/hood ownership remains a concern similar to an issue identified in the accident investigation earlier this year (see 6/3, 7/15/2022 reports).

Plutonium Facility–Conduct of Operations: On Wednesday, facility personnel held a fact-finding meeting to investigate a lockout tagout (LOTO) procedure violation after facility workers discovered a damaged circuit breaker lockout pin. Participants identified several concerns: 1) poor key-keeping practices, 2) locks being used by other than the authorized worker, 3) evidence of tampering with a locking mechanism, and 4) workers unfamiliar with site LOTO policies and practices. Facility management paused work on the impacted project pending re-training of workers on LOTO policies and procedures, and completion of an extent of condition.

Fire Protection: Last week, the NNSA Los Alamos Field Office approved the 2021 *Los Alamos National Laboratory Baseline Needs Assessment for Fire Protection and Emergency Response* with three conditions of approval. The updated assessment includes the current DOE-Los Alamos County Cooperative Agreement for fire department emergency services, contract adoption of DOE Order 420.1C Chg. 3, *Facility Safety*, and changes since the last assessment. The report describes the poor condition of two of the county's fire stations and includes a discussion on plans for replacement. The field office's conditions of approval are 1) the development of a conceptual staffing plan for upcoming fire station replacements within six months, 2) the closure of NNSA review comments in the next revision of the document, and 3) an explanation of the technical need and justification for recently procured firefighting robots in the next revision.