

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 7, 2023

TO: Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director
FROM: A. Boussouf and D. Gutowski, Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for the Week Ending April 7, 2023

Staff Activity: A headquarters staff team participated in a teleconference with DOE and N3B personnel to discuss the development of the atmospheric dispersion protocol planned for use with the new DOE Standard 3009-2014 compliant documented safety analysis under development for Area G.

Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Building (CMR): This Tuesday, CMR personnel held a fact-finding meeting to discuss an incident where a worker entered a restricted area without authorization or the proper personal protective equipment (PPE). The worker entered a filter tower to perform work and, upon realizing others in the area had different PPE, notified a radiological control technician in the area. The technician checked the worker for contamination and allowed them to leave the area. During the meeting, the worker noted they entered the area through a door from the attic, that the rope restriction was not installed across the entire entryway, and that they misunderstood the access restrictions in place. Radiological control personnel countered that the intent of the rope-style barrier should have been evident, the area was “red lit,” and appropriate postings were in place. Meeting personnel identified several potential corrective actions to prevent recurrence, including designating entrances from the attic to filter towers as non-normal entryways, evaluating radiological control barrier practices, and holding a lessons learned meeting for all CMR residents.

Plutonium Facility–Emergency Management: Facility personnel held a discussion-based emergency preparedness drill for the Plutonium Facility. The scenario was a chlorine leak inside of a laboratory room involving the chlorine system that was upgraded last year (see 11/11/2022 report).

Plutonium Facility–Infrastructure: Facility personnel continued recovery efforts from the HEPA filter cool down spray actuation (see 3/17/2023 report). This week, workers completed the installation of new HEPA filters across the affected housing. On Thursday evening, the photometer used for efficiency testing of the filters failed and no calibrated spares were readily available at the Plutonium Facility. On Friday, filter testing was completed using a calibrated photometer from CMR. Facility personnel are working directly with the photometer manufacturer to ensure additional calibrated spares are available. Next week, facility personnel plan to finalize HEPA filter testing and lift the standing order controlling access to the impacted wing of the facility (see 3/24/2023 report).

Area G–Readiness: A federal team performed a readiness assessment for size reduction of corrugated metal pipes. The team identified 9 pre-start findings, 4 post-start findings, and 11 deficiencies. Notable findings included open deficiencies in the fire hazard analysis pertaining to a new diesel fuel tank, the flow-down of operating requirements into procedures, and missing calibration for a pressure gauge on the hydraulic shear.