

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 3, 2023

TO: Timothy J. Dwyer, Acting Technical Director
FROM: A. Boussouf and D. Gutowski, Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for the Week Ending November 3, 2023

Staff Activity: A. Boussouf completed his assignment as a Los Alamos resident inspector. He will remain in New Mexico, but report to DNFSB headquarters supporting fire protection engineering needs complex wide. D. Brown was on site to observe personnel from the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant perform a generator site technical review on transuranic waste practices at Area G. The review covered corrugated metal pipe (CMP) activities.

Plutonium Facility–Decontamination and Decommissioning (D&D): A room owner reviewing a D&D work package to sign off on a hold point noticed that not all previous hold points had been signed. The in-progress package supported removal of a glovebox, and the unsigned hold points related to criticality safety and radiological control. Work on this glovebox is currently paused while D&D personnel are reviewing active work packages to identify other missed hold points. They have found many missed signatures and are trying to determine whether actions for hold points have not been completed or whether this is largely an error in documentation. Once this extent of condition is completed, Plutonium Infrastructure management plans to develop improvements to their work planning and control processes.

Plutonium Facility–Radiological Control: On Tuesday, a glovebox worker performing container repackaging detected contamination on their personal protective equipment (PPE) during monitoring immediately after exiting their glovebox gloves. Radiological control technicians responded and found a tear on the right thumb of the glovebox glove. While there was no skin contamination, and appropriate operator actions helped prevent further spread, the level of PPE contamination was quite high. Facility personnel are developing several potential corrective actions including evaluating different tools in the cold lab to reduce pinch and sharps hazards when handling similar container types.

Area G–Operations: While N3B remains in the overall stop work for training issues, major operations at Area G have all been released by senior management (see 10/6/2023 report). Retrieval and cutting of CMPs are progressing with 13 CMPs being fully cut and packaged into standard waste boxes while one CMP is partially cut as of Thursday afternoon. N3B personnel are planning to increase throughput by adding a staggered shift to CMP cutting.

Federal Oversight: On Wednesday, the NNSA Field Office transmitted to Triad its completed assessment of nuclear criticality safety integration into fissile material handler training. One driver for performing this assessment was the large number of new employees going through fissile material handler training. The assessment team identified nine findings and eight observations. Many of the findings relate to traceability of training and retraining requirements. The Field Office requested that Triad perform an extent of condition review of past fissile material handler and supervisor training to identify any deficient training or certification. Within 60 days, Triad must respond to the Field Office with information describing how findings from the assessment and any discoveries from the extent of condition review have been documented in the issues management system.