

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 20, 2025

**TO:** Technical Director  
**FROM:** Los Alamos Site Resident Inspectors  
**SUBJECT:** Los Alamos Activity Report for the Week Ending June 20, 2025

**Area G–Safety Basis:** On Tuesday, N3B staff identified a broken insulator holding a fuse on a utility pole-mounted transformer at Area G. Triad and N3B coordinated to repair the insulator, but no vehicle was available with a small enough fuel tank to comply with the restrictions on combustibles in that area. The N3B Facility Operations Director for Area G made the decision to allow the truck into the area to make the urgent repairs under DOE regulations, which allow for a deviation from approved technical safety requirements to protect workers, the public or the environment from imminent and significant harm. The repairs took approximately one hour, and during this time, N3B put in place a dedicated attendant to monitor the vehicle as a compensatory measure. A similar incident involving a utility vehicle occurred two years ago (see 9/1/2023 report).

**Area G–Safety Basis:** The Environmental Management Field Office approved N3B’s strategy to optimize the new documented safety analysis prior to its full implementation at Area G. N3B will revise the currently approved safety basis and submit it to DOE by the end of the year. The initial version of this safety basis was approved last year (see 11/15/2024 report), and implementation was delayed due to preparations related to the flanged tritium waste container mitigation project (see 1/10/2025 report). The changes were requested to optimize safety controls and ensure they can be implemented efficiently and effectively.

**Plutonium Facility–Criticality Safety:** Recently, workers installed a concrete grout pad and did not request a required criticality safety inspection prior to introducing wet grout into a process room. The work instructions required workers to pause after concrete forms and dust control installation had occurred, to allow criticality subject matter experts to inspect the work to verify it meets criticality safety requirements prior to the introduction of wet grout. The non-compliant condition of grout placement without the required criticality safety review existed for approximately five days before being identified. Criticality safety personnel ultimately determined the risk was negligible during the post-incident analysis; however, the verification steps should have occurred prior to the introduction of wet concrete. Facility and project management called a work stoppage and performed an initial review of the incident. Several concerns were identified in the review, including: the procedure being used in the field was out of date and poorly worded, and relevant updates to the work procedure had been processed, but those updates were not provided to field personnel. Additionally, and most importantly, workers did not properly follow the procedure when performing the work. Workers also identified significant schedule pressure and worker turnover as a contributing cause. Triad is performing a formal causal analysis to develop corrective actions to prevent reoccurrence of this issue and provide insights into improving safety program compliance during the construction process.