

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 11, 2013

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** S.A. Stokes, Acting Technical Director  
**FROM:** R.T. Davis and R.K. Verhaagen  
**SUBJECT:** Los Alamos Report for Week Ending October 11, 2013

Because of the ongoing lapse in federal appropriations, NNSA has directed LANL to prepare for the orderly closure of all site operations except for activities required to maintain facilities in a minimum safe state. This state includes compliance with safety basis requirements for nuclear facilities (e.g. performance of Technical Safety Requirement surveillances and minimum staffing). Without a resolution to the appropriations, LANL will transition to this closure mode for all operations at the close of business on October 18, 2013. LANL is identifying essential personnel to maintain a safe shutdown mode along with a resumption team that will focus on plans to safely restart operations following the shutdown. The Field Office is also identifying a small number of excepted personnel.

**Los Alamos Field Office:** Ike White reported for duty this week to be the acting field office manager for the next 60 days. Mr. White replaces Geoffrey Beausoleil who had been acting in this position pending selection of a new manager.

**Confinement Vessel Disposition (CVD) Project:** This week, the Federal Operational Readiness Review (ORR) for the CVD Project in the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Building (CMR) concluded. The Federal ORR team identified 29 pre-start and 25 post-start findings. Despite the large number of findings, the ORR team cautioned against over emphasizing the numbers, as they concluded the issues were generally discrete with clear paths to closure. Operations, criticality safety, and engineering were identified as subject areas with the greatest opportunities for improvement. Following adequate closure of the pre-start findings and the development of a corrective action plan for closure of the post-start findings the team concludes that CVD nuclear activities can be safely conducted in CMR.

**Plutonium Facility – Criticality Safety:** Plutonium Facility management approved a major revision to the Technical Administrative Procedure, *TA55 Nuclear Criticality Safety Program*. This procedure identifies the Roles, Responsibilities, Authorities, and Accountability requirements for the development, implementation, revision, and periodic review of new and existing criticality limits. Changes were made to address issues raised in the Board's July 15, 2013, letter that identified significant non-compliances with applicable DOE requirements and industry standards in the implementation of LANL's criticality safety program. Specific to the Board's issues, the revision clarifies expectations for implementation of criticality controls in procedures, procedure use categories, and material labeling.

**Safety Basis:** NNSA recently completed an assessment of the LANL safety basis program and provided initial feedback to laboratory management. The assessment identified the following seven findings: 1) lack of an effective process to ensure safety basis documents are reviewed prior to submittal; 2) ineffective process to ensure safety basis deliverables meet NNSA expectations; 3) lack of an effective comment resolution process; 4) inadequate process to implement DOE-STD-1189 in addressing NNSA comments for LANL projects; 5) internal assessments not performed per LANL procedures; 6) inadequate formal process for implementation of new or revised safety basis documents; and 7) cancellation of a safety basis procedure that did not meet LANL requirements.