

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 8, 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR: S.A. Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: R.T. Davis, R.K. Verhaagen, and J.W. Plaue
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Report for Week Ending November 8, 2013

DNFSB Staff Activity: Dr. J. Plaue reported for Site Representative duty on Monday. Staff members R. Arnold and B. Laake were on site to review documentation associated with the technical basis for the W76 weapons response summary document. The staff and site reps also participated in a multi-site video-teleconference concerning implementation of Issue H of the weapons response summary document and falling man hazards at the Pantex Plant.

RANT Shipping Facility – TRUPACT III Loading Enclosure (TTLE): LANL submitted a Safety Basis Strategy for construction of a TTLE at the RANT shipping facility. The TTLE will provide facility personnel a location to load Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) - Waste Acceptance Criteria compliant standard large box 2 (SLB2) shipping packages into TRUPACT III Type B containers using a 40 ton bridge crane. The TTLE will be a large Quonset hut type building with the primary function of providing weather protection for TRUPACT III loading operations, which require temperatures to remain above 40° F. The SLB2 is a large shipping container with an equivalent volume of approximately thirty-five 55-gallon drums. As such, the SLB2 provides the capability to ship large intact items, such as gloveboxes, directly to WIPP without having to conduct size reduction activities, significantly reducing risk to the workers and public. The submission of the Safety Basis Strategy includes a preliminary hazards evaluation and a completed questionnaire from Appendix J of DOE-STD-1189 to conclude that construction of the TTLE does not constitute a major modification of the RANT shipping facility.

Weapons Engineering Tritium Facility (WETF): Recently, WETF personnel identified that the Integrated Work Documents (IWDs) that cover radiological control technician (RCT) work (e.g. surveys, monitoring, radiological equipment use and maintenance) were not evaluated by the Unreviewed Safety Question (USQ) process as required by the safety basis. Facility personnel identified corrective actions during a critique on Tuesday that included: 1) ensuring all IWDs and procedures used by RCTs are evaluated under the USQ process; 2) identifying other support organization procedures used at WETF; 3) verifying these support organization procedures are evaluated under the USQ process; 4) evaluating improvements to the WETF work control procedure; and 5) defining the process for authorizing work for support organizations.

LANL management also identified the need to perform an extent of condition review at other nuclear facilities. Based on an initial review, some support organization IWDs and procedures at other nuclear facilities do not receive a USQ evaluation. In addition, there is no systematic institutional process to ensure these procedures are properly evaluated. A LANL team is reviewing this problem to determine appropriate site-wide corrective actions and will recommend changes to institutional procedures.

Electrical Safety: On Wednesday, the LANL Chief Electrical Safety Officer provided the field office with an overview of three recent electrical safety issues that occurred in October. Recommendations and improvements for each of the individual events were identified. In addition, broader lessons learned will be communicated across the laboratory.