

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 18, 2014

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** S.A. Stokes, Technical Director  
**FROM:** R.K. Verhaagen and J.W. Plaue  
**SUBJECT:** Los Alamos Report for Week Ending July 18, 2014

**DNFSB Staff Activity:** Deputy Technical Director R. Tontodonato performed his annual observation of site representative operations.

**Transuranic Waste Facility (TWF) Project:** Last Thursday, the NNSA Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs provisionally granted the project Critical Decision 3, *Approve Start of Construction*. The provision requires approval of an updated safety design strategy, which project and field office personnel expect to complete shortly. The project team also issued a lessons learned report for development of the preliminary documented safety analysis. Among the numerous suggested procedure changes include actions to formalize management involvement in the comment resolution process, promote effective communication with the field office by documenting results of project team interactions, and document expectations that safety basis personnel work directly for the project engineering manager.

**Plutonium Facility–Safety Basis:** On Tuesday, the field office approved the 2014 annual update to the safety basis. This update was minimal and primarily included a previously directed action regarding changes to the technical safety requirements. The field office expects LANL to implement the 2014 update with the 2013 update by May 31, 2015 (see 7/11/14 weekly).

**Plutonium Facility–Criticality Safety:** On Monday, LANL submitted a response to the Field Office's request for a status update associated with resumption of programmatic activities (see 7/4/14 weekly). LANL's response identified three resumption status bins including operations that were: actively resumed as of June 27, 2014; in extended shutdown and require a formal readiness assessment for restart; and not resumed by June 27, 2014, but not considered in extended shutdown and as such do not require a formal readiness assessment for restart. NNSA headquarters personnel were onsite to assist the field office in assessing compliance of the proposed submittal with DOE Order 425.1D, *Verification of Readiness to Startup or Restart Nuclear Facilities*.

**Plutonium Facility–Work Control:** During a walk-down of operations, NNSA personnel raised questions that resulted in the pause of two jobs. In one instance, fissile material handlers were in the process of loading containers of enriched uranium into a safe posted as an abnormal operating condition due to a suspected criticality deviation. The safe had been posted since August 2013 and after review at that time was determined to represent a level 5 infraction due to discrepancies with the dimensions. Management held a critique of the event and discussed a number of areas for improvement including failure to execute the recovery plan from the infraction, confusion on work authorization and release mechanisms, posting accuracy and effectiveness, and conduct of operations issues. The Site Representatives note that critique effectiveness improved from clearly presenting appropriate documentation to the entire audience.

**Confinement Vessel Disposition Project:** Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Building personnel moved the first confinement vessel into the Wing 9 enclosure in preparation for cleanout. Once inside the enclosure, personnel paused the activity to allow a procedure change necessary to replace improperly sized rigging equipment that had been previously installed.