

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 10, 2015

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** S.A. Stokes, Technical Director  
**FROM:** R.K. Verhaagen and J.W. Plaue  
**SUBJECT:** Los Alamos Report for Week Ending July 10, 2015

**DNFSB Staff Activity:** On Thursday, D.K. Andersen, D.J. Campbell, P.J. Foster, and R.L. Jackson conducted a teleconference with LANL and field office Transuranic Waste Facility project personnel to follow up on construction quality issues identified during a prior DNFSB staff review (see 5/15/15 weekly).

**Area G–Fire Protection:** This week, crews initiated remedial actions under the vegetation control element of the Fire Protection Program. These remedial actions included brush and vegetation removal, and were taken in response to results of last month’s required periodic inspection. The inspection indicated all Defined Areas within Area G had unsatisfactory control of grasses and weeds, 4 had unsatisfactory control of shrubbery, and 4 of the primary waste storage domes had grass and weeds growing on all sides. Additionally, all of the defensible areas outside of the fence had grass, weeds, and shrubs within their clearance areas. Of note, the Fire Protection Program vegetation control element is credited as an administrative control in the Area G safety basis to reduce the frequency of certain design basis accidents.

**Area G–Nitrate Salts:** Area G personnel are in the process of installing increased capacity cooling equipment for the Dome 375 Permacon (see 4/3/15 weekly). This is a significant modification, to include installation of a large chilling unit, associated piping and electrical connections, and additional cooling coils within the Permacon’s existing ventilation ducting. This effort is a compensatory measure to provide improved cooling of the remediated nitrate salt waste, while also serving as a backup for the primary systems were they to fail.

**Plutonium Facility–Restart Activities:** This week, LANL submitted, and the field office concurred on, a revised corrective action plan for the previously completed Balance of Machining contractor readiness assessment. The plan was revised to address field office concerns that corrective actions in the initial submittal were inadequate to fully address all post-start findings (see 6/26/2015 weekly). On Wednesday, the management self-assessment team issued the final report of their Pit Flowsheet activity review and concluded that upon satisfactory resolution of identified pre-start findings, Plutonium Facility personnel could safely support Pit Flowsheet operations. The contractor and federal readiness assessments for Pit Flowsheet are scheduled for August and October of this year respectively.

**LANL Management Responsibilities:** On Tuesday, the LANL Director communicated his expectations for management responsibilities in support of employee safety and security to all LANL personnel. This direction follows a number of recent safety and security incidents that have highlighted a need for improvement in these areas. The Director emphasized that there is nothing more important than ensuring every reasonable step is being taken to ensure workforce safety and security. The mechanisms through which these steps are expected to be accomplished include a visible and active leadership presence in the field and increased access to Environment, Safety, and Health experts. In addition to communicating the expectation for increased presence in the field, training on how to effectively observe activities and communicate observations was provided to the leaders expected to perform these duties.