

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

January 31, 2025

TO: R. T. Davis, Acting Technical Director
FROM: E. Freeman, D. Gutowski, and J. Kemp, Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for the Week Ending January 31, 2025

Area G–Safety Basis: Last Friday, the DOE Environmental Management Field Office sent a letter of direction to N3B clarifying the approach for implementing the newly approved documented safety analysis (DSA) for Area G (see 12/20/2024 report). The letter directs N3B to continue with the implementation of the Area G DSA while prioritizing the venting of flanged tritium waste containers stored on site. The letter also provides an extension to N3B for the implementation of the new DSA, allowing until September 30, 2025, for full implementation.

Federal Oversight–Training: Earlier this month, Triad provided a corrective action plan to address the issues from the NNSA Field Office’s independent assessment of the Triad training program (see 10/25/2024, 1/17/2025 reports). As a compensatory measure, Triad established an Integrated Training Action Board to evaluate immediate action needed, review the causal analysis, and to develop the corrective action plan. The causal analysis for the eight findings from NNSA’s review included two root causes: Triad management did not adequately communicate a clear message on the requirements and expectations for training, and there was less than adequate ownership of nuclear facility training. Contributing factors included weaknesses in the learning management system, less than adequate issues management, and training not commensurate with the education and experience of the current workforce. Proposed corrective actions are expected to be completed by the end of August 2025 and include the following: defining nuclear facility program training ownership with respect to the institutional training program, aligning job position requirements and standards with nuclear facility needs, and reevaluating the capabilities of the current learning management system.

Plutonium Facility–Glovebox Safety: On Thursday, site personnel held a periodic Glovebox Safety Committee meeting to discuss topics related to glovebox safety. One key topic was the solution to a previously identified glovebox glove degradation issue related to plastic tubing used to cushion the metal glove clamps used to hold gloves outside the glovebox when not in use (see 3/1/2024 report). Triad personnel resolved this issue by developing 3D printed plastic covers for glovebox clamps and are in the process of installing these components in glovebox facilities.

Recently site personnel identified a glovebox that would sometimes flex with operator movement within the gloves. Engineering personnel evaluated the situation and determined the box was operable but degraded and a plan to resolve the issue is being developed. The glovebox remains in service.

Plutonium Facility–Safety Basis: This week Triad submitted updated parameters used for analyzing the leak path factor and atmospheric dispersion modeling methodology to the NNSA field office. The update is in response to previous concerns raised by the NNSA Field Office staff related to the use of the aerodynamic effects of building wake in the dispersion factor calculation used for the plutonium facility.