

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 15, 2024

TO: Timothy J. Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: E. Freeman, D. Gutowski, and J. Kemp, Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for the Week Ending November 15, 2024

DNFSB Staff Activity: K. Johnson and J. Plaue were in New Mexico this week for a series of meetings and site visits. On Wednesday, they met with local stakeholders and staff of elected representatives to hear about current issues of interest and foster open communication between DNFSB staff and members of the public. On Thursday, they visited the Los Alamos National Laboratory to tour the Plutonium Facility and Area G and meet with public affairs personnel from Triad and the NNSA Field Office. On Friday, they presented to the New Mexico Legislature's Radioactive and Hazardous Materials Committee on DNFSB activities in New Mexico.

Area G–Safety Basis: On Tuesday, the Environmental Management Field Office and DOE Headquarters conditionally approved the new safety basis for Area G (see 7/19/2024 report). This safety basis uses the most modern DOE standards. The safety evaluation report includes nine conditions of approval and nine directed changes. The conditions of approval must be resolved within one year and include: updates to the hazards analysis, addition of vegetation control as a key element of the fire protection safety management program, and revisions to administrative control descriptions to assure alignment with their derivation and the hazards analysis. The directed changes must be incorporated prior to implementation of the new safety basis. They include: several revisions to the safety function descriptions in the technical safety requirements to better align these controls with their bases, and the addition of key elements in safety management programs. N3B personnel are planning to implement the new safety basis prior to the end of February 2025. Physical installations of liquid impediments to support implementation are in progress.

Plutonium Facility–Safety Basis: Last month, Triad submitted to the NNSA Field and Project Management Offices a temporary modification to the safety basis to support construction of new equipment in a processing room. During this construction, there will be a temporary condition where gloveboxes containing molten plutonium will not meet their required seismic requirements as components from construction could fall onto them. The temporary modification provides allowance for the construction to proceed with procedural restrictions on molten plutonium operations during certain stages of the construction project.

Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Building (CMR)–Safety Basis: On Thursday, Triad submitted to the NNSA Field Office for approval a safety basis addendum that would allow storage of gloveboxes removed from the Plutonium Facility in the CMR yard. Currently, the only types of material at risk allowed in the yard are decontaminated confinement vessel spheres and low-level waste. The addendum proposes allowing doubly contained radioactive material in the yard to support staging of gloveboxes in metal outer containers. The total material limits for the yard would not change with this allowance of an additional type of material.