



Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Agency Overview

*Presented to
F.E. Warren Air Force Base
Acting Chairman Thomas A. Summers
May 8, 2025*



DNFSB Overview

“The mission of the Board shall be to provide independent analysis, advice, and recommendations to the Secretary of Energy to inform the Secretary, in the role of the Secretary as operator and regulator of the defense nuclear facilities of the Department of Energy, in providing adequate protection of public health and safety at such defense nuclear facilities, including with respect to the health and safety of employees and contractors at such facilities.” - Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended

Current Board Members



**Mr. Thomas A.
Summers**
Acting Chairman



Dr. Patricia L. Lee
Member



3 Vacancies

The Atomic Energy Act empowers the DNFSB Chair to carry out the functions of the Board without a quorum, in consultation with any other Board Members, for a period of one year.



Establishment of the DNFSB

- Department of Energy is a self-regulating agency
- In the 1980s there was an increased public awareness of the environmental and safety impacts from DOE's nuclear weapons production
- The Chernobyl accident in 1986 further elevated public awareness and concerns
- Congress questioned DOE's ability to manage safety in the nuclear weapons complex
- Spearheaded by Senator John Glenn, Congress established the Board and charged it with identifying potential safety issues at DOE's defense nuclear facilities



Temporary disposal of nuclear waste at Idaho National Laboratory



Spent fuel pool at Hanford K Reactor



DNFSB's Statutory Authorities

Statutory safety oversight responsibilities:

- Evaluate content and implementation of safety standards
- Investigate events or practices that may adversely impact public health or safety
- Analyze design and operational data
- Review facility design and construction

Statutory authorities:

- Issue formal recommendations to the Secretary of Energy
- Issue reporting requirements to the Secretary of Energy
- Conduct open or closed hearings and meetings, and subpoena witnesses if needed
- Conduct special studies



Scope of DNFSB Safety Oversight

The Board conducts nuclear safety oversight of:

- Complex, high-hazard operations involving testing, assembly, or disassembly of nuclear weapons, and operation of defense nuclear facilities
- Remediation of nuclear wastes and legacy facilities from more than 70 years of DOE defense nuclear operations
- Design and construction of new DOE defense nuclear facilities
- Aging and deteriorating mission critical infrastructure at DOE defense nuclear facilities/sites
- Adequacy of DOE safety standards related to design, construction, operations, and decommissioning of defense nuclear facilities



Typical glovebox



WIPP transuranic waste



DNFSB Organization

- We have about 110 federal employees, including 71 technical staff members.
- The technical staff are organized into five topical areas:
 - Nuclear materials processing and stabilization
 - Nuclear weapon programs
 - Nuclear programs and analysis
 - Nuclear facility infrastructure and projects
 - Field operations



Hanford Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant

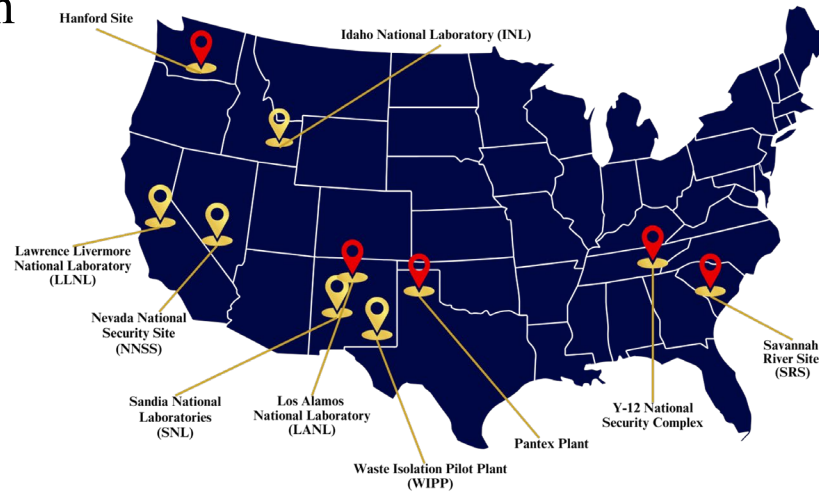


Criticality safety training



DNFSB Organization (Continued)

- Most staff work out of our headquarters in Washington, D.C.
- The Field Operations Group consists of resident inspectors who provide continuous safety oversight at the major DOE sites with defense nuclear facilities
 - Hanford Reservation
 - Los Alamos National Laboratory
 - Pantex Plant
 - Savannah River Site
 - Y-12 National Nuclear Security Site





Questions?

Board communications, resident inspector weekly reports, public hearing information and other agency information are available at:

www.dnfsb.gov

