

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 16, 2025

TO: Technical Director
FROM: Los Alamos Site Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for the Week Ending May 16, 2025

Flanged Tritium Waste Containers (FTWC)–Readiness: DOE personnel conducted a Federal Readiness Assessment (FRA) to evaluate the capabilities of Triad and N3B to safely vent the FTWCs stored at Area G, as well as the ability of the Environmental Management and NNSA Field Offices to provide effective oversight. The assessors observed a mock FTWC venting activity in Technical Area 49, where an area was set up to simulate the FTWC storage shed and surrounding in Area G. During the out-brief, the assessment team discussed six pre-start and one post-start finding. Three of the pre-start findings related to procedure quality and compliance, including instances where procedures could not be performed as written, steps were signed off as completed despite being incorrect or not fully understood, and steps were signed off as completed without being performed. The post-start finding noted that the Environmental Management Field Office no longer has any qualified Facility Representatives. Prior to the FRA, EM-LA issued correspondence to N3B outlining the interim staffing measures implemented to address the shortage. The NNSA Field Office recently assigned two individuals as acting Facility Representatives to help fill this gap.

Waste Characterization, Reduction, and Repackaging Facility (WCRRF)–Operations: WCRRF personnel successfully completed size reduction activities for the first glovebox received from the Plutonium Facility (see 5/2/2025 report). During this first work evolution, workers encountered minor issues, including unexpected condensation. These issues were satisfactorily resolved, and corresponding changes have been incorporated into procedures. The next glovebox is expected to be received at the facility by the end of this month.

Area G: Last week, the Carlsbad Field Office approved a waste stream profile for packaged Corrugated Metal Pipes (CMPs). The waste stream profile outlines the technical characteristics that waste must meet for acceptance at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). This week, the first five packaged CMPs were certified for shipment to WIPP. Nearly 800 packaged CMP standard waste boxes, resulting from the size-reduction of 158 CMPs, are currently stored in Area G. These packages must undergo characterization to be certified for shipment to WIPP.

Safety Systems–Quality Assurance: The NNSA Cognizant Secretarial Officer for Safety issued a memorandum to NNSA Field Offices, including Los Alamos, that provides a recommended approach to testing of High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filters. Currently, DOE-STD-3020-2015, *Specifications for HEPA Filters Used by DOE Contractors*, requires 100% inspection and testing of filters at the DOE Filter Test Facility. The DOE Office of Environment, Health, Safety, and Security issued a memorandum last year that proposed halting this testing, as they consider it to be unnecessary, given HEPA filters are manufactured for DOE facilities under Nuclear Quality Assurance processes. DOE is planning to shut down the Filter Test Facility, which sites currently rely on to meet this testing requirement. The NNSA memo recommends that field offices direct their contractors that 100% testing of HEPA filters at the DOE Filter Test Facility, as required by DOE-STD-3020-2015, is no longer necessary.