

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

August 8, 2025

TO: Technical Director
FROM: Los Alamos Site Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for the Week Ending August 8, 2025

Plutonium Facility–Radiological Control: Last Wednesday, several workers in the Plutonium Facility alarmed handheld radiation monitors while attempting to leave the basement. Radiological Control Technicians (RCTs) responded and determined that six workers' booties were contaminated, and there was contamination on the floor leading back to an area with staged waste bags. They found removable contamination throughout the staging area with the highest levels—over 750,000 dpm/100 cm²—at one storage pallet with damaged waste bags stored on top and oil leaking underneath. The area was posted as a High Contamination Area. During a fact-finding meeting held on Tuesday, personnel determined that several waste storage and packaging procedures were not followed, and corrective measures were needed. However, the programmatic group responsible for this waste did not attend the meeting, and insufficient information was available to identify underlying issues and establish corrective actions. Attendees also highlighted the similarities between this event and previous events in April (see 5/9/2025 report).

Plutonium Facility–Work Control: Recently, management identified several issues related to work performed on and inside of a glovebox. Last year, construction management performed several changes, including window and gasket replacements and earlier this year turned the box back over to the programmatic users. Shortly thereafter, workers discovered contamination leaking out around two window gaskets and the bag-out port gasket. Facility management reviewed the issue further and determined workers had not properly performed the required turnover checklist, which was a missed opportunity to catch the leaking gasket issue. Management additionally discovered chemical processing operations had occurred inside the glovebox, which were not approved for that location. Currently the glovebox is out of service, and the leaking gaskets are sealed with tape. Management is performing further reviews to determine the cause of the contamination leaks and the path forward to restore operations inside the glovebox.

Area G–Radiological Control: Last week, facility management identified that the authorization needed to bring a commercial radiological source owned by a subcontractor onsite for soil density testing had expired several weeks ago. In addition, RCT support, as required by the radiological work permit, was not provided for some of the work. A management review determined that although authorization was not in place, workers were not directly exposed to a radiological hazard during the work, and the source met the subcontractor's commercial safety requirements. Facility management paused work and is performing a causal analysis to determine corrective actions.

Plutonium Infrastructure: The resident inspectors walked down the warehouses in Technical Area 51 with a representative from Triad's Plutonium Infrastructure organization. These opened at the end of 2023 and provide space in a low-hazard, non-nuclear facility to support the following functions: construction material storage, fabrication of glovebox components, and mockups for hands-on training activities.