

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

September 5, 2025

TO: Technical Director
FROM: Los Alamos Site Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for the Week Ending September 5, 2025

Emergency Preparedness: On Wednesday, the site held its annual full-scale emergency preparedness exercise, which was a joint site and Office of Secure Transportation event. The simulation scenario included a hazardous materials release of hydrogen fluoride gas from a cylinder in Technical Area 46. The resident inspectors observed exercise activities at incident command, the emergency operations center, the exercise event scene, and the joint information center. Triad is self-assessing its exercise performance, and NNSA organizations are developing their federal assessment of the activity.

Plutonium Facility–Radiological Control: Last month, there was a skin contamination incident in a room undergoing deactivation and decommissioning activities in the Plutonium Facility. An escorted individual entered the room without the appropriate level of personal protective equipment (PPE). During their self-survey upon departing the room, the worker discovered contamination on the left palm. Radiological control technicians responded and successfully decontaminated the individual using tape presses and wipes. Management is evaluating PPE requirements and training to prevent recurrence of this type of event. Under current requirements, when wearing a lab coat and booties, workers are only allowed to perform limited hands-off activities.

Throughout this week, Triad management conducted a safety blitz at the Plutonium Facility focusing on adherence to radiological control requirements such as wearing proper PPE and dosimetry. This activity is in response to a consistently high number of minor radiological control violations (for example, not wearing all required PPE) within the facility. During the safety blitz, Triad stationed personnel at the entrance to the Plutonium Facility to check incoming workers' equipment and discuss the importance of adhering to requirements and procedures with them. A resident inspector observed the safety blitz and noticed that workers were adhering to requirements and were receptive to the messaging from the personnel supporting the safety blitz.

Federal Oversight–Safety Basis: On Tuesday the NNSA Field Office provided the contractor the results of its assessment of the site's Unreviewed Safety Question (USQ) screening process. The assessment team focused on evaluating four objectives to verify that the USQ screening process complied with federal regulations and other requirements. The team reviewed a sample of USQ screenings to determine if they met the assessment objectives. Two of the four objectives were met and there were two findings. In one finding, the team found four of the thirty-one screenings evaluated for the assessment provided inadequate bases for the conclusions reached. For the other finding the team determined five of the forty-one evaluated screenings contained inadequate descriptions of the changes being screened. Additionally, the team provided an observation that many of the screenings contained repetitive language that was not appropriately tailored to the subject of the individual USQ screening. The field office directed the contractor to address the issues identified in the assessment report.