DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 27, 2026

TO: Technical Director
FROM: Los Alamos Site Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for the Week Ending February 27, 2026

Emergency Management: On Tuesday, the site conducted the annual emergency preparedness exercise. The scenario included a wildfire starting near the RANT Shipping Facility that spread during the exercise. Due to the fire, there was also a hazardous materials issue due to a suspended load of transuranic waste drums left in an unsafe condition. The field play took place in Technical Area 49 as a stand-in for RANT due to conflicts with waste shipping schedules. This resulted in a large amount of simulation, which participants commented on during exercise hotwashes. Conduct of the exercise is being evaluated by Triad and NNSA personnel.

Plutonium Facility–Criticality Safety: Recently, facility personnel discovered several items, including toolboxes, buckets, and carts that did not meet criticality requirements for liquid volume capacity. Criticality safety controls restrict the fluid capacity of items in areas of the plant containing plutonium-bearing liquids so that a leak in liquid lines or other equipment cannot collect into an unsafe geometry. The criticality safety review team determined the loss of the control was the lowest level of infraction, and the condition was within the bounds of the criticality safety analysis. No nuclear material was involved, and no other hazards were present. After being discovered, workers either removed the items from the area or drilled holes in the items to prevent buildup of liquids. Facility management conducted a fact-finding and is evaluating corrective actions including an extent of condition review, better inspection of carts and toolboxes that enter the plant, and additional workforce instruction.

Plutonium Facility-Radiological Control: Recently, facility management conducted a fact finding regarding three contamination events that occurred on the same set of gloves over the last several weeks. No skin contamination or injuries were involved. For the first event, workers detected contamination on their personal protective equipment glove, but no source was identified. The second and third events resulted in workers identifying holes in both glovebox gloves and additional contamination. The gloves were over five years old, and the team found signs of abrasion and cuts. The team identified that the gloves were previously lightly used and are on the longest allowed changeout frequency. Recent activities are causing the gloves to be used much more often, and the team suggested that they should be evaluated for more frequent changeout. In addition to changing out the gloves, the team is evaluating corrective actions, including increasing the regular changeout frequency, adding additional lighting to allow better glove inspections, taping sharp objects, and improving communication with the glovebox safety team.

PF-400–Safety Basis: Last Friday, Triad submitted a revision of the safety basis for the PF-400 facility to the NNSA Field Office. The revision increases the facility material-at-risk limit to the cap for hazard category 3 nuclear facilities. PF-400 transitioned from a radiological to a nuclear facility in 2023 (see 2/24/2023 report). Another major change in this revision is the inclusion of a criticality safety program per the updated nature of process criticality safety evaluation for the facility.