

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 6, 2026

TO: Technical Director
FROM: Los Alamos Site Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for the Week Ending March 6, 2026

Plutonium Facility–Safety Basis: Last month, the NNSA Field Office approved Triad’s safety basis for the Plutonium Facility (see 2/20/2026 report). Triad is expected to submit a plan to implement the full safety basis within 60 days of that approval; however, earlier this week, Triad sent a letter for information to the field office identifying accelerated implementation of the glovebox safety function/control from the new safety basis. Due to changes in certain requirements between the issuance of the old and new safety bases, the seismic categorization and associated surveillance for most gloveboxes will be lowered once the new safety basis is implemented. Since Triad is in the process of removing old gloveboxes and installing numerous new ones to support pit production and other goals, Triad stated in its letter that implementing this facet of the safety basis early will represent a significant benefit in terms of efficiency. This implementation will not affect those gloveboxes that are credited for protecting members of the public from key accident scenarios, since requirements for those gloveboxes remain unchanged between safety basis revisions.

On Monday, the NNSA Field Office approved the revised safety basis addendum associated with receipt and repackaging of large quantities of heat source plutonium material (see 2/6/2026 report). The approval included one directed change, which requires clarification that the surveillance being relaxed is still required until the material is no longer in a condition in which the highest consequence pressurized release accident is credible.

Plutonium Facility–Work Control: Last Tuesday, workers cutting and removing air piping in a room undergoing decontamination and decommissioning encountered an unexpected viscous liquid that dripped on one of their hoods. The workers were in two layers of personal protective equipment (PPE) and were wearing respiratory protection. The crew placed the area in a safe configuration, unsuccessfully attempted to clean up the viscous liquid, and then exited the tent with radiological control technician support to cut them out of their PPE. One worker had their inner PPE contaminated by the unknown material when it soaked through the outer layer. The inside of the tent also had significant contamination; however, no contamination spread outside the tent. To prevent events like this from recurring, management is requiring that engineered controls such as sleeves or point source ventilation be used for all future line removals.

Plutonium Facility–Criticality Safety: Workers reported a non-compliant condition that occurred during a material movement. They were performing two material moves, and both containers of fissile material were delivered to the same glove box at the same time, resulting in the glove box exceeding the posted mass limit. The response team determined the condition was outside the normal process but within analyzed conditions, resulting in the lowest level of infraction severity. Facility management held a fact finding and discussed several precursors to the event such as nonfunctional indicating lights on the conveying system, a nonfunctional communication system resulting in the use of runners, insufficient lighting and viewports in the receiving area, unclear procedure language, and uncoordinated movement schedules. Management is evaluating corrective actions.