

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 20, 2026

**TO:** Technical Director  
**FROM:** Los Alamos Site Resident Inspectors  
**SUBJECT:** Los Alamos Activity Report for the Week Ending March 20, 2026

**Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Building:** Workers performed an infrequent activity of emplacing an empty container back into its array location in the high-dose storage area. The contents had been previously removed (see 2/20/2026 report) as part of an overall inventory reduction effort. Additionally, the workers verified that the location and one other similar location were free of material. The team used this activity to train additional staff in the operation of the equipment used in the handling of high-dose containers and materials. Prior to the recent removal, the high-dose storage area had not been accessed for approximately seventeen years. A resident inspector observed the activity, which was performed without incident.

Facility workers performed a routine job hazard analysis related to maintenance on hot-cell safety equipment. The contractor uses job hazard analyses involving a multidisciplinary team to identify and plan for potential hazards when planning work. A resident inspector observed the activity.

**Plutonium Facility–Conduct of Operations:** This week, management identified a degrading trend in housekeeping and combustible control issues at a management review meeting. Several areas in the plant have combustible-controls to reduce fire consequences to an acceptable level. This negative trend is similar to what resident inspectors identified last year (see 3/21/2025 report). The available information indicates that conditions had been improving since early 2025 but have recently started to degrade again; this aligns with resident inspector observations over the same timeframe.

**Plutonium Facility – Fire protection:** On Monday, the NNSA field office issued a letter of non-concurrence with a recent glovebox fire-hazard evaluation. The field office provided examples of inadequate hazard identification and analyses, among other reasons for non-concurrence. Fire-hazard evaluations consider the fire hazards present in gloveboxes as part of the overall facility fire hazard analysis process.

**Weapons Engineering Tritium Facility:** On Tuesday, miscommunications led to two valves being in the incorrect position during a transfer of helium gas within the safety-significant Tritium Gas Handling System. This burst a rupture disk within the system, which relieved the pressure to a tank within the system boundary. No tritium was released from the system. Facility management held a learning team to discuss improving rigor in valve lineups for non-tritium transfers. Facility management concluded this event does not meet DOE reporting criteria. A similar incident involving a tritium transfer rather than helium occurred approximately four years ago (see 1/28/2022 report).

**Emergency Management:** The NNSA Field Office entered into a new master cooperative wildfire-response agreement with the state of New Mexico and other federal agencies with adjacent land responsibilities. The intent of this agreement is to enhance coordination and cooperation between all parties for wildland-fire mitigation, planning, response, and restoration. The agreement allows for independent action by NNSA to perform suppression actions on adjacent lands when there is a threat to the laboratory from a wildfire.