

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 27, 2026

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

Plutonium Facility–Training: On Monday, Triad management issued a pause on all Plutonium Infrastructure (PI) work in Technical Area 55 due to a failure in the work control and training and qualification programs. In late 2025, new qualification programs were put in place for certain management positions such as construction supervisors and construction managers; however, there were delays in implementation with multiple extensions granted. After reviewing the program, contractor staff self-identified potential issues with the completion of the new qualification programs and initiated a self-assessment. This showed that most of the staff in these positions had not fully completed the qualification program assigned to them. Contractor management is currently performing a root cause analysis and an extent-of-condition review to determine whether this issue is broader than just PI positions and what exactly caused the failures in the program. Early results appear to highlight a combination of human error and the wrong systems being used to verify qualification status as contributing to the failure. As individuals correct their training deficiencies, work is being released by management.

Transuranic Waste Facility (TWF): A key tool in certifying a subset of transuranic waste containers for shipment to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant is Real Time Radiography (RTR). For several years, TWF had an RTR trailer in the yard that was never used due to lead contamination, and it was not evaluated during the original operational readiness review prior to facility startup. A new RTR trailer is onsite awaiting installation in TWF. The NNSA Field Office requested an exemption from DOE Order 425.1D, *Verification of Readiness to Start Up or Restart Nuclear Facilities*, which would allow the site to forgo a formal readiness review for startup of the RTR process. On Tuesday, the NNSA cognizant secretarial officer for safety concurred with the justification behind the exemption request while commenting that an exemption was not necessary as the RTR does not introduce substantial changes to the safety basis, equipment, procedures, training, or staffing. The new RTR trailer is currently staged outside of TWF. A few weeks ago, an issue with the suspension on the transport trailer prevented movement of the trailer into TWF using the electric trailer jockey. On Wednesday, the NNSA Field Office unconditionally approved a safety-basis temporary modification that will allow vehicles with higher fuel capacity to enter TWF to place the RTR trailer. These vehicles will be continuously attended by both a fire watch and spotters to mitigate the hazard of the additional fuel.

PF-400–Safety Basis: On Wednesday, the NNSA Field Office unconditionally approved the revised safety basis for PF-400 with increased material-at-risk limits (see 2/27/2026 report). In the approval letter, the field office provided comments to address in the next annual update of the safety basis. One comment pertained to the documentation in the safety basis of the nature of process review that supports the conclusion that a nuclear criticality accident is precluded in the facility. The annual update that will incorporate this additional detail is expected to be submitted at the end of May.