DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 9, 2026

Los Alamos National Laboratory Resident Inspectors Activity Report for Week Ending October 9, 2026

Board Activity: On Thursday, NNSA and Triad management provided the first annual briefing to the Board on progress in upgrading the engineered safety systems at the Plutonium Facility (see Board letter 10/10/2025). The briefing also covered the justification for removing the deluge system protecting high-efficiency particulate air filters in the ventilation system (see Board letter 12/6/2022, 7/3/2026 report).

Plutonium Facility–Fire Protection: Last Thursday, facility personnel discovered a disconnected piping support for a safety-class fire protection sprinkler system. Facility engineering performed an analysis upon discovery and determined no damage occurred and the system is operable but degraded. Safety-class systems are credited by the safety basis to protect the public from unacceptable accident consequences. Facility management held a fact-finding during which they determined the support had been disconnected in April 2026, likely by construction crews installing new components for an unrelated system. The removal was not in the approved work scope. The support could not be immediately reinstalled because of the challenging work location and because newly installed equipment was obstructing the mounting point. Facility and construction management are working on a recovery plan.

Recently, the NNSA Field Office approved several fire hazard evaluations (FHEs) related to gloveboxes containing significant ignition sources. FHEs evaluate the fire hazards in a glovebox and specify the measures needed to control fire risks within those gloveboxes. In 2017, an approved equivalency required the field office to approve certain higher hazard FHEs as part of the FHE process. Additionally, the engineering management reported to the resident inspectors that they achieved their target of evaluating at least 100 gloveboxes in the last fiscal year. The facility also recently updated their technical procedure revision process to require fire protection subject matter expert review of most procedure changes which may impact the fire hazards within a glovebox. The procedure change occurred after several recent fire events involving process changes that did not receive proper reviews (see 6/26/2026 report).

Readiness: On Wednesday, the NNSA Field Office approved Triad's quarterly startup notification report. There is one item in this report: startup of the Transuranic Liquid Waste Facility. As a new hazard category 3 nuclear facility with a new safety basis, this triggered an NNSA operational readiness review. Readiness reviews and startup are expected next calendar year.

Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Building: The resident inspectors performed a routine walkdown of Wings 9 and 7. They also discussed an upcoming heavy lift with facility management. The facility is preparing for the removal of a large, empty cask from the Wing 9 basement, which is an infrequently performed activity.