DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 15, 2026

Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) Cognizant Engineer Report for June 2026

Staff Activity: The staff did not conduct any onsite activities at SNL in June 2026.

Technical Area V (TA-V) – Operations: TA-V management personnel have instituted several actions to help reduce incidents involving radiological boundary crossings (see March 2026 report). Since multiple events involved subcontractors or other visitors to TA-V, management directed that all subcontract work, whether or not it is intended to be performed near a radiological area, will include a formal pre-job brief to discuss potential hazards. All subcontractors must also receive general employee radiological training, as well as training on local alarms and emergency response actions, before performing work at TA-V. Facilities have also increased the usage of stanchions and ropes to augment postings in locations that are infrequently or intermittently posted as radiological areas, to help provide a clear visual indication of potential radiological hazards when they exist. Management continues to evaluate further improvement actions.

Sandia Pulsed Reactor Facility (SPRF) – Safety Basis: SPRF personnel completed a causal analysis in response to an unreviewed safety question determination related to inconsistencies between emergency response procedures and documentation in the facility safety basis (see May 2026 report). The causal analysis found that the configuration management process used to update the SPRF safety basis several years ago did not effectively identify all documentation updates required based on feedback from external groups. Specifically, the Memorandum of Agreement with Kirtland Air Force Base (which provides certain emergency services to Sandia) was updated to reflect changes to how emergency responders would obtain access to the facility; however, this contradicted language in the safety basis about restricting access to the reactor room. The long-term corrective action identified in the causal analysis is to resolve the safety basis discrepancies through the normal unreviewed safety question process and submit the changes to the Sandia Field Office for approval.