

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

January 13, 2017

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** S.A. Stokes, Technical Director  
**FROM:** R.K. Verhaagen and J.W. Plaue  
**SUBJECT:** Los Alamos Report for Week Ending January 13, 2017

**DNFSB Staff Activity:** Z.S. Beauvais, C. Berg, and J.D. Anderson were on site to attend the kick-off meeting for the W76 Nuclear Explosives Safety Study. They also conducted walk-downs of the Plutonium Facility and Weapons Engineering Tritium Facility, and observed an emergency drill at the Waste Characterization, Reduction, and Repackaging Facility (WCRRF).

**Inappropriately Remediated Nitrate Salt (RNS) Waste–Emergency Management:** LANL management has taken action to strengthen emergency management following a less than adequate performance during an emergency exercise that resulted in a pre-start finding from the management self-assessment for WCRRF readiness (see 12/9/16 weekly). For example, this week WCRRF personnel conducted three type 2 (instructional) emergency drills involving limited participation from the Los Alamos Fire Department and the LANL Emergency Operations organization. They plan to conduct additional operational and emergency drills, including a type 3 (evaluated) drill next week to assess the adequacy of preparations to commence the contract readiness assessment, currently scheduled for January 30, 2017. Additional actions include detailing several emergency management specialists to help prepare the facilities for the RNS treatment campaign and beginning to introduce the concept of “critical steps” into the drill evaluation objectives.

**WCRRF Operations:** On Tuesday, WCRRF personnel took the facility into WARM Standby mode for the first time in nearly three years. This action allowed operations personnel to complete cleanout of the waste characterization glovebox, removal and shipment of the associated transuranic waste, and installation of the equipment needed for the RNS treatment campaign.

**Federal Oversight:** On Monday, the NNSA Field Office issued a revision to its Differing Professional Opinion procedure. The Field Office issued this revision as a corrective action for the Organizational Health Assessment conducted earlier this year (see 9/2/16 weekly).

On Tuesday, the staff of the Chief of Defense Nuclear Safety commenced its review of the NNSA Field Office. The review is expected to run through March 2017 and will include review of 14 functional areas including, criticality safety, safety culture, emergency management, issues management, readiness, and oversight processes.

**Transuranic Waste Facility (TWF) Project:** On Monday, LANL management transmitted to the NNSA Field Office for information the TWF safety basis implementation plan. The scope of the plan includes all safety controls with the exception of those associated with the deferred project scope involving the waste characterization trailers. A formal schedule for completing the trailer scope is not yet available, but the trailers are needed to certify the waste for offsite disposition and current regulatory permit requirements dictate that waste containers can reside at TWF for no more than one year. The implementation plan states completion in March 2017.