

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 3, 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR: S.A. Stokes, Technical Director

FROM: J.W. Plaue

SUBJECT: Los Alamos Report for Week Ending November 3, 2017

Inappropriately Remediated Nitrate Salt (RNS) Waste–Treatment Activities: On Friday, Waste Characterization, Reduction, and Repackaging Facility (WCRRF) personnel completed treatment of the 60th and final RNS container of the campaign. WCRRF personnel accomplished this significant milestone in a safe and deliberate manner, resulting in the elimination of a substantial hazard at the laboratory. Next week, Area G personnel plan to commence their contractor readiness assessment in support of the upcoming campaign to treat the unremediated nitrate salts.

Plutonium Facility–Conduct of Operations and Work Control: On Wednesday, Plutonium Facility management briefed NNSA Field Office personnel on the status of efforts to recover from the radiological contamination event that occurred on September 23, 2017 (see 9/29/17 weekly). The managers noted progress from the decontamination team in the affected rooms. Earlier this week, the adjacent room was released for access under restrictions that require the use of additional protective equipment and contamination surveys. They anticipate similar release of the primary room next week. Managers discussed corrective actions taken to ensure craft personnel have a consistent understanding of “field route,” as well as plans to enhance facility access training with information associated with the hazards of exposing new surfaces and accessing radiological systems. They further noted that this event had prompted the need to develop a larger standing team of personnel trained in decontamination and the acquisition of additional powered air purifying respirators. NNSA Field Office personnel questioned how corrective actions from the overmass event (see 10/27/17 weekly) had been integrated with these corrective actions from this event, as well as emphasized the need for management presence on the floor and consistency in training between operations and craft personnel.

Plutonium Facility–Startup Activities: On Wednesday, the NNSA Field Office approved the plan of action (POA) for the upcoming federal readiness assessment of electrorefining operations. Notably, the POA includes scope to evaluate the actions taken and planned to address issues identified in the contractor readiness assessment that did not rise to the level of a finding, as well as actions taken and planned to address the operational weaknesses identified during the overmass event in the casting room.

Safety Basis: On Thursday, the NNSA Field Office transmitted their close-out of comments related to the site-wide dispersion protocol. The direction maintains previous restrictions related to certain atmosphere phenomena, but allows LANL management to propose modifications on a case-by-case basis.

Weapons Engineering Tritium Facility: On Wednesday, LANL management transmitted to the NNSA Field Office for approval a safety basis addendum to support the removal of the Building 205 ventilation stack. The stack, which is 60 feet tall, has not been used in several years. The submittal addresses hazards associated with the use of a mobile crane and the associated lifting and maneuvering. The facility will continue using the Building 450 stack.