

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 9, 2018

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** S.A. Stokes, Technical Director

**FROM:** J.W. Plaue and D. Gutowski

**SUBJECT:** Los Alamos Activity Report for Week Ending February 9, 2018

**Federal Oversight.** On Tuesday, the NNSA Field Office issued their enhanced oversight plan and conduct of operations implementation plan for the Plutonium Facility (see 12/15/2017 report). The oversight plan includes use of field office personnel augmented by resources from the NNSA Office of the Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety to increase field oversight to assure the contractor's sustained operational compliance with their conduct of operations manual. The initial focus area is an assessment of implementation of controls and conduct of operations. The implementation plan specifies that federal oversight will be coordinated through one of the Facility Representatives and includes templates for expected deliverables from oversight personnel.

**Fire Protection.** On Monday, Sigma Complex workers removed a burr from a recently cut piece of depleted uranium metal to prevent injury; however, it sparked and ignited two rags wetted with acetone. They quickly placed the rags into a nearby plastic bucket used to collect chips and extinguished the fire with staged graphite, preventing further involvement of uranium materials. No injuries and no contamination resulted from the event. Notably, this was the same operation that experienced a small chip fire last year (see 5/12/2017 report) and corrective actions were completed, including an improved work control document that a fire protection engineer reviewed due to the anticipated frequency of fires involving pyrophoric materials. However, at a follow-up discussion requested by the NNSA Field Office, LANL personnel acknowledged the need to clarify expectations for reporting extinguished fires—in this case, the workers' supervisor contacted the emergency operations center, but the fire department was not dispatched to check the scene as intended.

**Plutonium Facility–Risk Reduction Activities.** LANL personnel briefed NNSA Headquarters managers on progress with the Materials Recovery and Recycle program. Achievements included processing 33 items from the vault, developing a tool to facilitate safer disposition of metallographic mounts, and processing of 26 liters of bottled solutions under a safe and stable campaign to eliminate a criticality infraction associated with the electrolytic decontamination system. They also reviewed options to support the future of the Special Recovery Line, which provides a unique capability for the weapons complex (see 3/21/2014 report).

**Emergency Management.** Last month, the NNSA Field Office established a formal watch bill for the federal officials that may be needed to support an emergency response. LANL emergency management personnel are still assessing the need for a formal watch bill.

**Safety Basis.** LANL safety basis personnel informed the NNSA field office that they intend to adjust the timing of annual updates for safety bases. Instead of submitting annual updates one year after the last submittal, they plan to submit them one year after the date of NNSA approval.

**Weapons Engineering Tritium Facility (WETF).** Last week, WETF safety basis personnel entered the New Information process due to a question as to whether clips on a seismic rack have a safety function to retain containers.