

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 8, 2020

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director  
**FROM:** J.W. Plaue and D. Gutowski, Resident Inspectors  
**SUBJECT:** Los Alamos Activity Report for Week Ending May 8, 2020

**COVID-19 Impacts:** Developments this week include:

- Triad rolled out mandatory training for onsite work based on its new institutional policy.
- Plutonium Facility personnel continued to resume additional mission critical manufacturing activities that had been paused for a regularly scheduled inventory of nuclear material.
- Triad personnel continued transuranic waste characterization and movement activities. They completed two shipments from the RANT Shipping Facility to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant.

**Safety Basis:** On Monday, the NNSA Field Office formally transmitted its review comments on Triad's revised Unreviewed Safety Question (USQ) procedure, which was submitted for approval in January. The field office requested a revised procedure incorporating necessary comments and official responses for any that remain unresolved. Comments from the field office included concerns regarding exclusions of certain types of documents, drawings, and activities from the USQ review; linkage of the USQ process with the New Information/Initial Confirmatory process; and a lack of timeliness requirements for preparation of Evaluation of the Safety of the Situation documents.

**Plutonium Facility–Safety Basis:** On Monday, the NNSA Field Office unconditionally approved the safety basis change associated with increased material-at-risk in the basement (see 4/17/2020 report).

**Fire Protection:** Arid, windy conditions drove the regional fire danger risk to its highest level, extreme, on Thursday. COVID-19 has not significantly impacted Triad's wildland fire mitigation team's vegetation control efforts. N3B personnel are also continuing with fuel mitigation efforts within Area G.

**Transuranic Waste Management:** Triad and N3B personnel continue to establish processes and procedures to enable the use of the RANT Shipping Facility for the EM owned waste stored at Area G. Eventual achievement of this capability will represent a positive step toward risk reduction for the overall laboratory, particularly since the waste at Area G is the least well protected and mobile loading operations are highly weather constrained. So far this fiscal year, Triad has been able to complete 15 shipments to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, while N3B has completed just one.

**Area G:** On Wednesday, N3B personnel held a teleconference with EM Field Office and Headquarters personnel to discuss their proposal to conduct an upcoming contractor and federal readiness assessment in parallel for size reduction of corrugated metal pipes. No decision was reached, but they agreed to research historical EM direction that prohibited such a parallel approach and conduct a more thorough analysis of the benefits and disadvantages for this and future readiness assessments. N3B managers also noted that in order to utilize the parallel approach, they need field office approval of the revised readiness process procedure that was submitted in November 2019.