

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 20, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR: Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director

FROM: A. Boussouf, D. Gutowski and J. Plaue, Resident Inspectors

SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for Week Ending May 20, 2022

Wildland Fire: The Cerro Pelado wildfire west of the laboratory did not grow significantly last week and is now more than 70 % contained. On Tuesday, given the decreased threat to laboratory property, Triad downgraded staffing levels for the Emergency Operations Center and laboratory personnel returned from maximum telework status. Given the dry conditions of fuels in the area, wildland fire experts remain concerned about a new fire start and have placed additional fire restrictions on laboratory property and the surrounding area.

Weapons Engineering Tritium Facility: Last week during the monthly surveillance for the safety-significant Oxygen Monitoring System, facility personnel identified problems with monitors in two gloveboxes and determined they were inoperable. Further evaluation found a white deposit on these detectors, and an extent of condition on other detectors in the plant found no other white deposits. Facility personnel cleaned the white deposit and reperformed the surveillance, which restored the function of the detectors. The system has been restored to service, and the facility's investigation continues including communications with the detector manufacturer.

Plutonium Facility—Infrastructure: Last week on the backshift, workers decontaminating a glovebox slated for removal identified contamination on their personal protective equipment indicative of a glove breach. There were no issues with the workers' response to the event, and no evidence of skin contamination or any airborne radioactive material. The work crew was conducting a first use of a new decontamination solution, which is expected to be used in many other boxes. Deactivation and decommissioning activities continue to ramp up at the Plutonium Facility. Following this event, facility management is recommending evaluating changing glovebox gloves to 20 mil thickness prior to in-box decontamination activities to provide an optimal balance of durability and dexterity. The gloves involved in the event were 15 mil thickness and had been in contact with equipment inside the glovebox.

Plutonium Facility—Readiness: Earlier this month, facility management determined that no readiness activities, including a management self-assessment or subject matter expert checklist reviews, are necessary for the upcoming campaign to process large quantities of heat-source plutonium. The screening worksheet acknowledges the activity will involve larger quantities of radioactive material but notes that this change has been approved in the safety basis with procedural controls. Given the overall determination, Triad's joint readiness evaluation team will not be considering this activity. The NNSA Field Office is reviewing the matter.

Area G—Readiness: A contractor team commenced the readiness assessment for retrieval of Corrugated Metal Pipes (CMP) in Area G. Size reduction and packaging of the CMPs into standard waste boxes for disposal as transuranic waste is not part of the scope of this review and will be assessed at a later date. This week, the team performed interviews, observed an emergency preparedness drill, and watched a field demonstration for uncovering the CMPs with an excavator which included an operational drill. The review will continue next week.