

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 10, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR: Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director
FROM: A. Boussof, D. Gutowski, and J. Plaue, Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for Week Ending June 10, 2022

Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Building: The resident inspectors joined members of the Los Alamos County Fire Department and Triad emergency management personnel for a familiarization tour of the facility. The tour covered building access, facility layout, fire alarm panels, and facility command for emergency response. Fire department personnel annually tour the high hazard facilities onsite to maintain awareness of facility conditions to support emergency response. The tour was cut short due to a fire alarm in an adjacent facility. A binder left on a furnace in the Materials Science Laboratory started smoking.

Fire Protection: Earlier this year, Triad completed a management assessment of spurious and inadvertent fire protection system alarms during the prior three-year period. During this period, the laboratory experienced approximately 100 false alarms per year that required a fire department response. Approximately 25 percent of these alarms were caused by maintenance or construction work near detection devices. The assessment identified seven opportunities for improvement with recommended actions and two noteworthy practices. Recommendations included: issuing formal event notifications and further evaluating spurious alarms, allocating funding for the replacement or additional maintenance of fire suppression systems, and adjusting work planning and control processes to reduce maintenance and construction impacts. One of the noteworthy practices is that Triad utilities personnel are in the process of installing water filling stations in lieu of hydrants for non-firewater uses such as dust suppression.

Area G–Operations: The resident inspectors observed Central Characterization Project personnel performing flammable gas measurement of transuranic waste drums in Area G using the new control set from the Justification for Continued Operations (see 8/13/2021 report). No issues were noted; the spatula-like tool that blocks the drum vent during sampling was in place for only the brief period of time needed to pull the gas sample (seconds to minutes). The new control limits the time the drum vent is blocked to ten hours or less.

Emergency Management: The NNSA Field Office completed an assessment of Triad's Emergency Management program focused on the Emergency Response Organization, termination and recovery, and readiness assurance. The assessment identified one finding related to maintaining training records for Incident Response Commanders. Triad had previously identified this issue in an assessment of their training program, and corrective actions have been developed and are being worked.