

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 24, 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 June 24, 2022

DNFSB Staff Activity: After nine years at LANL and four years at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, J. Plaue completed his service in the field and will be returning to DNFSB Headquarters (see 11/8/2013 report).

Flanged Tritium Waste Containers (FTWC): On Thursday, the resident inspectors observed Triad personnel resume practice for FTWC venting operations for the first time since last year. The rehearsal at TA-49 included a mock-up and walkthrough of steps for venting the FTWCs stored at Area G, and use of the remote vehicle for moving the FTWCs from the Area G storage sheds to a transport vehicle for shipment to the Weapons Engineering Tritium Facility. The rehearsal identified areas to improve the venting and loading activity.

Area G–Safety Basis: On Tuesday, the Environmental Management Field Office approved a revised safety basis for Area G. The approval included one directed change to adjust the wording of the specific administrative control for depressurization of FTWC headspace gas to ensure consistency with the Technical Safety Requirement definition. The Field Office confirmed that this version of the safety basis resolves one of the three conditions of approval from the Field Office’s conditional approval of the previous revision (see 12/10/2021 report). It incorporates revised calculations for FTWC pressurization and will allow venting to proceed. The two conditions of approval related to aircraft crash analysis remain open.

Plutonium Facility–Radiological Control: Last Wednesday, a contamination monitor detected a small particle of contamination on the arm of a Plutonium Facility worker. The particle was not detected on exit surveys from the glovebox and the lab room, but was caught at the hand and foot monitors at the facility exit. Facility personnel later held a fact-finding meeting to discuss the incident and the response. They noted that particles are especially challenging to detect and plan to reinforce the importance of having multiple layers of monitoring prior to exiting the facility.

Wildland Fire: On Thursday, Triad lowered fire restrictions on laboratory property from Stage III to Stage II. The surrounding region including Los Alamos County, Forest Service, and National Park Service also lowered fire restrictions on their land. Recent monsoonal rain events have increased moisture levels and lowered the wildland fire risk.