

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 13, 2023

TO: Timothy J. Dwyer, Acting Technical Director
FROM: A. Boussouf and D. Gutowski, Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for the Week Ending October 13, 2023

N3B–Training: Last Friday, the causal analysis team investigating N3B’s training issues transmitted its report to the Environmental Management Field Office (see 10/6/2023 report). They found the root cause of the event to be that N3B did not ensure their training program: clearly provided instructions to implement all the requirements of DOE Order 426.2, *Personnel Selection, Training, Qualification, and Certification Requirements for DOE Nuclear Facilities*; was executable as intended; and was updated as changes occurred. The direct cause was that N3B did not have an adequately documented training or tracking method to meet requirements for qualifications and requalification for Contact-Handled Transuranic Waste and Environmental Remediation activities. Contributing causes were identified in the areas of staff retention, human performance, management, and communications. The team also provided seven recommendations, which included: revising the N3B qualification standards and training implementation matrix; improving the learning management system to show a clear, consistent, and verifiable qualification status for each individual; and performing an extent of condition to assess if similar inconsistencies are affecting other safety management programs.

Plutonium Facility–Infrastructure: The Plutonium Facility entered limited operations mode at the end of last week to perform a variety of equipment upgrades and repairs. One key activity was installation of new instrument air compressor equipment. The instrument air system is a safety-significant support system, and non-credited process air was used to keep the ventilation system operational during installation (see 9/22/2023 report). System health reporting on the instrument air system had identified that the compressors were approaching end of life. This week, the south side of the facility remained in limited operations mode to support fire suppression system work. On Thursday evening, the entire facility returned to limited operations mode to support electrical maintenance over the weekend.

Onsite Transportation: Last Thursday, Triad submitted to the NNSA Field Office for approval a revised version of the Transportation Safety Document and associated Technical Safety Requirements. This latest revision is the 2023 annual update of the document and is intended to address field office comments from its conditional approval of the previous revision (see 8/18/2023 report). Remaining field office comments will be addressed in the 2024 update.

Waste Characterization, Reduction, and Repackaging Facility (WCRRF): Efforts continue to restart WCRRF as a hazard category 3 nuclear facility. At the end of September, Triad provided the NNSA Field Office with a schedule to reconstitute the code of record for the facility. Triad now plans to have a final code of record to support startup by October 2024. Triad also provided NNSA with a safety basis addendum to the current hazard category 2 document that will authorize transition activities including decontamination of the Glovebox Enclosure and receipt and size reduction of uncontaminated large pieces of equipment, such as gloveboxes. Last week, Triad submitted an updated fire hazards analysis that is intended to address a condition of approval from NNSA’s approval of the preliminary documented safety analysis (see 9/1/2023 report). The document provides an updated status of all current equivalencies in the facility and a discussion of gaps from requirements. Two notable gaps leave the facility more vulnerable to exterior fires. There is one large section of the exterior stucco wall that has failed and is being repaired. Also, fire resistance properties of the exterior insulation finishing system led to a recommendation to restrict combustibles around the building.