

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 1, 2023

TO: Timothy J. Dwyer, Acting Technical Director
FROM: D. Gutowski, Resident Inspector
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for the Week Ending December 1, 2023

Staff Activity: D. Gutowski was virtually in Washington, DC for the biannual ingathering of the resident inspectors to DNFSB headquarters. A. Boussouf was on site Tuesday and Wednesday providing support.

Area G–Work Planning and Control: On Tuesday, Area G management stopped work on corrugated metal pipe (CMP) retrieval and size reduction due to the identification of an issue with a procedure revision that removed a critical lift plan. Work was already stopped due to the training documentation issues identified two Thursdays ago (see 11/17/2023 report). As loads during size reduction activities can exceed 75% of the maximum rated capacity of lifting equipment, a critical lift plan is required per N3B policy. Several evolutions were completed with the revised procedure, and therefore without an associated critical lift plan. To lift this stop work, N3B management is evaluating either restoring the critical lift plan to the procedure or performing engineering work to eliminate the requirement for a plan for this activity. They are also evaluating whether the procedure development process is adequate and how to improve its effective use.

Plutonium Facility–Safety Basis: Last Monday, Triad personnel concluded that the pyrophoric event in a glovebox constituted a potential inadequacy of the safety analysis (see 11/10/2023 report). While the safety basis includes deflagration events for other processes and gloveboxes, there is no scenario specific to the size reduction process where the flash and fire occurred. Controls for those energetic events in other activities may not apply to this process.

Transuranic Waste Facility–Fire Protection: In early November, fire protection fitters reported water dripping from the fire department connection to one of the waste storage buildings. Further investigation determined that two ball drip check valves on the drain lines for the fire department connection were in the incorrect position. Triad personnel entered the New Information process to evaluate the safety basis impacts on the safety-significant fire suppression system. This Wednesday, safety basis personnel concluded that there was no potential inadequacy of the safety analysis primarily because the drain lines are not part of the safety-significant pressure boundary for the system.

Waste Characterization, Reduction, and Repackaging Facility (WCRRF): On Tuesday, the NNSA Field Office unconditionally approved a safety basis addendum to the current hazard category 2 WCRRF safety basis that supports activities to transition to a hazard category 3 facility. These activities include removal of existing contaminated equipment and practice evolutions for equipment downsizing. WCRRF will remain in cold standby for these activities and no new material at risk will be introduced. On Wednesday, the Field Office acknowledged Triad's plans for reconstituting the facility's code of record (see 10/13/2023 report).

Weather Impacts: A winter storm disrupted laboratory activities on Thursday and caused a delayed opening on Friday.