

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 25, 2024

TO: Timothy J. Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: E. Freeman and D. Gutowski, Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for the Week Ending October 25, 2024

Staff Activity: F. Bamdad, M. Bradisse, and J. Jarvis were on site to review the new documented safety analysis for the Plutonium Facility (see 4/19/2024 report). They held meetings with Triad and NNSA personnel and walked down portions of the Plutonium Facility including laboratory rooms used in the analysis of bounding accident scenarios. During said walkdown, the staff identified that access to one of the fire risers in the basement was restricted by scaffolding. This would increase the time needed to implement the current measure to manually reactivate feed to the filter cooldown sprinklers. Following the inadvertent actuation of these sprinklers last year (see 3/17/2023 report), facility personnel closed feed to them and implemented a requirement to manually restore water during potential fires. A thermal analysis is in progress to determine whether these sprinklers are required per code. The staff also participated in an evacuation drill for the leased facility in the townsite where the meetings were held.

Area G–Electrical Safety: On Monday afternoon, workers performing size reduction of corrugated metal pipes observed an electrical arc and heard a loud pop when they were performing the routine clearing of debris from the cutting equipment with a long-handled rake. The workers paused and performed a controlled exit from the radiologically controlled area. There were no injuries, shocks, or radiological contamination spread. On Tuesday, the facility operations director elevated the pause to a stop work as the source of the electrical discharge is unknown. There was maintenance performed on the cutting system last Friday, but it is not known if this could be related to Monday’s event. Electricians and maintenance personnel are investigating the cause of this event and have so far found some inadequate grounding.

Federal Oversight–Training: On Monday, the NNSA Field Office transmitted to Triad for action the results of a federal review of Triad’s training program. In the transmittal letter, the Field Office directed Triad to address the eight findings and ten observations from the report through its issues management system. The assessment evaluated three objectives from the DOE standard on evaluating training programs: Management and Administration, Development and Qualification of Training Staff, and Conduct of Training. It concluded that the first two objectives were not met and the third was partially met. Findings related to the lack of clear lines of authority between training organizations, poor documentation of training records, and weaknesses in trainer qualifications. The assessment also identified four noteworthy practices including the use of instructors with substantial operational experience.

Onsite Transportation: Last Friday, Triad submitted to the NNSA Field Office for approval a revised version of the Transportation Safety Document. The last submittal partially addressed the field office’s conditional approval with a commitment to address remaining Field Office comments in the next annual update (see 8/18/2023, 10/13/2023 reports). This submittal is intended to address the remaining field office comments prior to the planned annual update.