

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 18, 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: T. D. Burns Jr. and C. H. Keilers, Jr.
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Report for Week Ending February 18, 2005

Matthews and Jordan were here this week reviewing Integrated Safety Management.

NNSA Management: The NNSA Site Office is reassigning for 120 days about a fifth of its workforce (i.e., 20 out of 110) to increase federal oversight of safety, infrastructure, laboratory corrective actions, and security. Details are in development, but it appears that most of the increase will be in facility operations and security oversight; other local federal functions will be cut-back. Properly establishing priorities and effectively matching redeployed workforce skills to actual oversight needs appear key to the efficacy of this initiative. The Site Office Manager intends to periodically evaluate effectiveness and adjust priorities and personnel accordingly.

Integrated Safety Management (ISM): LANL is beginning a long-term effort to improve their ISM implementation by training managers and supervisors in the Dupont "Safety Training Observation Program," also called STOP™. This training focuses on skills for observing and auditing workplace safety, reinforcing safe work practices, correcting unsafe acts and conditions. Emphasis is on management commitment and individual responsibility for safety. The management and supervisor training consists of 8 modules, a trial period, and a refresher module, all expected to take about 9 months. LANL then plans to roll out corresponding training for employees.

Critical Experiments Facility (TA-18): Last Wednesday (2/9/05), LANL resumed obtaining federal concurrence with what operations are conducted at TA-18 (site rep weekly 2/4/05). This week, LANL began to shift lead responsibility for all TA-18 operations to the Nuclear Materials and Technology (NMT) Division, which previously played only a support role at TA-18 and only in the Early Move Project. NMT brings significant operational and fissile material shipping/handling expertise to this effort; however, this reassignment by itself doesn't resolve apparent resource constraints, nor does it address competing mission priorities. The latter now not only includes long-term viability of the criticality safety program, but also potential impacts to other NMT missions. LANL plans next month to submit to NNSA a resource-loaded plan for TA-18 activities.

Authorization Basis (AB): LANL senior management has approved centralizing institutional safety basis authority, as NNSA and LANL described to the Board in August 2004 (site rep weekly, 8/20/04). This authority will fall within the Performance Surety (PS) Division. The objectives include ensuring that appropriate priorities are established, that AB documents adhere to an institutional standard of quality, and that adequate training is provided to safety analysts. Under this arrangement, individual safety analysts will meet institutional standards but remain within their respective line organizations.

Tritium Facilities: TA-21 (TSFF) is resuming neutron tube target loading operations as an essential activity; LANL plans to also conduct a lab readiness review per the resumption process. Planning continues for transferring this mission to Sandia. NNSA has also accepted a LANL proposal to remove tritiated waste from TSFF under a partially implemented safety basis. A proposal to downgrade TSFF to radiological status is expected by September 2005 (site rep weeklies, 12/3/04, 1/21/05).

Training: NNSA has completed a performance-based training assessment at LANL in response to a Board letter (7/9/03) on all NNSA sites (site rep weekly 9/17/04); the report is expected in March.