

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 4, 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: Michael J. Merritt, DNFSB Site Representative
SUBJECT: Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory
Report for Week Ending February 4, 2005

Plutonium Facility Operating Status: The Plutonium Facility remains in Standby mode, and no programmatic work is currently being authorized. On January 28, 2005, LLNL formally identified immediate compensatory measures for the facility in stand-down. The Livermore Site Office (LSO) approved LLNL's compensatory measures on January 31, 2005. The compensatory measures are intended primarily to address deficiencies in the safety programs required by the facility's Technical Safety Requirements (TSRs). LLNL has proposed specific commitments in the areas of radiation protection, procedures, unreviewed safety questions, configuration management, maintenance, quality assurance, and occurrence reporting. Additionally, LLNL has committed to conduct an independent review of all ten safety programs identified in the TSRs. A report with the findings of this review is scheduled to be completed by March 31, 2005. The function of three of the safety programs had previously been reported as TSR violations (see weekly report dated January 21, 2005). For these programs, LLNL will develop a recovery plan within 15 working days of approval of the compensatory measures by LSO. The recovery plan will define longer term actions needed to ensure the effectiveness of the TSR-level programs for which violations have been declared.

Some of the specific compensatory measures identified by LLNL may not address the safety deficiencies adequately. For example, the compensatory measure for out-of-date operating procedures is to require two operators for performance of the procedure. It is not clear that the presence of a second operator would compensate for a deficiency in the procedure. Another example is the compensatory measure for the occurrence reporting program. The compensatory measure is to comply with the DOE order requirements for reporting occurrences. Given the fact that deficiencies in following these requirements exist, a more prescriptive action (e.g. additional training or briefings on reporting requirements) may be a more effective measure.

Shipment of Transuranic Waste Off Site: LLNL has completed all scheduled shipments of transuranic (TRU) waste from LLNL to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in Carlsbad, New Mexico. The final shipment left LLNL on January 28, 2005. Completion of these shipments resulted in the removal of approximately 700 drums of TRU waste from the LLNL site. Removal of these drums represents a significant reduction of risk at LLNL. The TRU waste drums shipped were characterized using the temporary WIPP Mobile Vendor (WMV) facility at LLNL. One of the WMV components, the Mobile Visual Examination and Repackaging unit (MOVER) remains at LLNL. A contamination event in the MOVER (see weekly report dated October 15, 2004) has delayed the removal of the unit from LLNL.

Public Interaction: On January 31, 2005, the site representative met with the executive director and the staff attorney for Tri-Valley CARES (Communities Against a Radioactive Environment). The representatives from Tri-Valley CARES requested the meeting to discuss LLNL's progress in addressing the Board's concerns relating to the Plutonium Facility's safety analysis, recent issues regarding configuration management of vital safety systems, and specific issues contained in site representative weekly reports.