

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 26, 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR: Timothy Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: Jonathan Plaue, DNFSB Site Representative
SUBJECT: LLNL Activity Report for Week Ending June 26, 2009

Staff members C. Martin and J. Shackelford were at the laboratory this week to observe a meeting of the Hazards Assessment Task Team supporting the B53 dismantlement. Shackelford also walked-down the installations underway supporting the Tritium Facility Modernization project.

Laboratory Management: This week, the laboratory announced the selection of the new Program Leader for the Nuclear Materials Technology Program. The announcement also refocused the role of Program Leader to include responsibility for facility operations in Superblock and Radioactive and Hazardous Waste Management. Programmatic operations in Superblock are now the responsibility of the Program Director for Nuclear Weapons Engineering. Both of these positions continue to report to the Deputy Principal Associate Director for Operations for Weapons and Complex Integration. Additional organizational refinements are likely to occur to support alignment and implementation of the new structure.

Tritium Facility Modernization: This project consists of three general elements: (1) conventional facility modifications and renovations, including the safety significant fire barrier and its appurtenances that separate the two increments, (2) the Tritium Process Station and its supporting equipment, and (3) the Tritium User Stations. Once the fire barrier is implemented as part of the annual update to the safety basis, each increment has been approved to operate at the Hazard Category 3 limit (30 grams for tritium); however, the total facility inventory is limited to 35 grams of tritium in accordance with the Environmental Impact Statement. Installation of equipment is ongoing and expected to be completed in July. The laboratory has placed high priority, including the use of overtime for several disciplines, on maintaining the scheduled Critical Decision 4 milestone on September 30, 2009. This aggressive schedule will require parallel installation, testing, and document completion, as well as other activities necessary to support implementation of the safety basis annual update. Some of these activities may extend into the management self-assessment planned for mid-July. The Livermore Site Office (LSO) is the authorization authority for this startup, which will examine only the conventional facility modifications and the Tritium Process Station. Completion and startup of the Tritium User Stations is currently on hold. The plan of action for the laboratory's readiness assessment was approved in May and is tentatively planned to occur in August. The LSO assessment will follow, likely in September. An operations need date to support the National Ignition Facility, a primary customer of the Tritium Processing Station, has yet to be formalized.