

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

August 27, 2004

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director  
**FROM:** T. D. Burns Jr. and C. H. Keilers, Jr.  
**SUBJECT:** Los Alamos Report for Week Ending August 27, 2004

Tom Burns reported for duty here this week as a DNFSB site representative. Also this week, a site rep discussed observations on resumption activities with the University of California ES&H Panel, which was here conducting an on-site review.

**LANL Resumption Status:** LANL is progressing on overall resumption and will likely resume some moderate-risk non-nuclear operations early next week. Nearly all nuclear facilities have begun their management self-assessments (MSAs); LANSCE and TA-18 are conducting MSAs for their moderate risk activities (i.e., Level 2) and have yet to propose the MSA scope for their higher risk activities (i.e., Level 3). Most nuclear MSAs are expected to be done in mid-September and to be followed by a multi-week lab readiness assessment (LRA). Schedules are fluid. Barring major pre-start findings, nuclear facilities might individually resume operations in October or November, 3 to 4 months after the stand-down.

**Integrated Safety Management (ISM):** An apparent breakdown in the LANL interim work control process played a major role in the LANL management decision to stand down the lab (site rep weekly 7/16/04); therefore, the site reps have been closely monitoring MSA evaluations of ISM. Preliminary indications are that the interim work control process is incompletely or inconsistently implemented in many nuclear and non-nuclear facilities. Furthermore, while an improvement over that of a year ago, the interim process still needs work; LANL recognized this before the stand-down, but anticipated improvements have been delayed by the stand-down. The assessments should provide useful feedback in improving the process. Identifying and fully implementing these improvements warrants priority.

**Authorization Basis (AB):** Last week, LANL revised its operations requirements (LIR 300-00-03.1) to improve the process for updating and maintaining Authorization Agreements (AAs). The AAs list the AB documents that support NNSA's decision to allow a nuclear or high hazard facility to operate. Most LANL AAs are out-of-date and are expected to be updated as part of the resumption process.

**Critical Experiments Facility (TA-18):** In a letter dated 5/21/04, the Board identified issues that need to be addressed near-term to ensure continued safe operations in TA-18. Most of these issues focus on ensuring adequate controls for critical experiments with plutonium metal. On July 9<sup>th</sup>, TA-18 curtailed nearly all operations including those for critical assemblies (site rep weekly 7/16/04).

Last week, LANL provided the status: LANL has tentatively identified 11 engineered controls and 16 administrative controls that play a role in managing the risk of reactivity insertion accidents for the 5 critical assemblies; LANL intends to recommend to NNSA discontinuing implementation of the principal engineered control - the in-core temperature monitoring system (ITMS); LANL will review both the risks and controls as part of the Level 3 resumption process during the next few months. These actions are expected to be responsive to the Board's 5/21/04 letter. NNSA still needs to respond next month to a reporting requirement on ITMS from an earlier Board letter (7/9/03).