

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 29, 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: C. H. Keilers, Jr.
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Report for Week Ending November 29, 2002

The laboratory was closed Thursday and Friday.

Radiochemistry Laboratory (TA-48): TA-48 is operating as a Hazard Category 3 (HC-3) nuclear facility under a justification for continued operation (JCO). In August, DOE approved a new TA-48 authorization basis (AB) for a 2 year interim period, consisting of a Basis for Interim Operation (BIO) and Technical Safety Requirements (TSRs), as discussed in site rep weekly 8/16/02.

Last Friday, DOE approved the TA-48 TSR implementation plan. The site rep understands that implementation is to be essentially completed by mid-January 2003 and ready for verification. This schedule appears compressed, and the effort has not started well. On October 2nd, the facility reported to DOE that counting facility propane sensors had been reset from 30% to 25% LFL, consistent with the DOE approval memo, but mid-November inspections determined that the reported change had not been made. Thorough verification of TSR implementation appears warranted.

Authorization Basis (AB): On November 8th, the DOE Site Office approved the LANL on-site transportation safety document (TSD) and associated TSRs (site rep weekly 9/27/02). The DOE preference is for LANL shipments to fully comply with Department of Transportation (DOT) requirements. However, in some cases, DOT certified or equivalent packages are not available due to physical configuration or other reasons. The TSD provides a framework for those cases and for the development of on-site, activity-specific controls that ensure the level of overall safety is maintained. These controls are to be captured in DOE-approved transportation plans. DOE directed that existing transportation plans be reviewed in the context of the new AB (e.g., vehicle speed and weather limitations), and resubmitted for approval. Implementation is also to be verified.

Facility Operations: DOE is close to acting on a LANL proposed site-wide JCO that would allow a major facility management realignment (site rep weeklies 9/6/02, 10/11/02). The proposed realignment involves consolidating numerous facility management organizations under a single, institutional lead manager. The goal is that this unified organization would then move forward to identify, plan, and implement needed organizational improvements while minimally impacting nuclear facility operations. LANL has stated that roles and responsibilities during the transition would remain consistent with current, specific AB requirements.

Specifically, each owning division leader would continue to be responsible for the AB and AB compliance, for the division's facilities and buildings, and for programmatic equipment and operations. The division leader would delegate authority for the building envelope to the institutional lead manager, which would then pass to the deployed facility manager. Facility Service Agreements are being developed to define roles, responsibilities, authority, and accountability. LANL will also conduct readiness reviews prior to realignment. Before the JCO expires (4/10/03), LANL will review the organizational changes against facility AB documents to determine what changes, if any, are necessary to the ABs.