

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

September 14, 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR: Timothy Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: Jonathan Plaue, DNFSB Site Representative
SUBJECT: LLNL Activity Report for Week Ending September 14, 2012

Plutonium Facility: Last week, facility personnel completed installation of the last upgraded Room Continuous Air-Monitor System (RCAM). The new RCAMs provide enhanced detection and radon discrimination compared to the previous legacy model. RCAMs are credited in the safety basis to detect the presence of airborne radioactive material and alert workers.

On September 10, 2012, the laboratory contractor submitted to the Livermore Site Office (LSO) a request to extend implementation of the safety basis annual update. The contractor requested an additional 50 days beyond the original 120 days to a new deadline of December 15, 2012. In its request, the contractor cited “ongoing and expected high priority work,” that conflicted with resources needed to ensure effective implementation.

The Site Representative notes that timely implementation of safety basis updates could be enhanced with the application of basic project management tools. At the time of the request, facility personnel had not completed a resource loaded implementation plan and schedule. This tool would facilitate identification of competing resources (in this case, facility management time to support implementation of Strategic Rollup Areas). These tools will also be important to deconflict resources needed to implement and verify the safety basis updates for the Plutonium and Tritium Facilities, which will occur in parallel if LSO approves the extension request.

Hardened Engineering Test Building: This week, institutional personnel completed the Implementation Verification Review (IVR) for the safety basis changes involving the storage as resident items of certain sealed sources and shipping containers containing tritium. Overall, the IVR team assessed implementation to be satisfactory in 4 of the 5 review areas. The non-satisfactory area involved the minimum operations shift complement. The reviewer noted that interviews with key facility personnel demonstrated that there was not a clear, consistent, and accurate understanding of the approved staffing requirements. In fact, the table providing staffing requirements is not user friendly and very confusing (i.e, there are 6 footnotes covering 4 conditions). This table represents another example of the need to improve integration between safety analysts, program personnel, and facility staff.

LSO and facility management assert that they have a common understanding of the table and will leverage the work control process to ensure staff requirements are met for programmatic activities in the near-term. Longer-term, facility management intends to translate the staffing requirements into clear, plain language as part of the Facility Safety Plan and the annual update to the safety basis currently in review.