

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

January 11, 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR: T. J. Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: R.T. Davis and R.K. Verhaagen
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Report for Week Ending January 11, 2013

Weapons Engineering Tritium Facility (WETF): In November 2012, LANL submitted an Evaluation of the Safety of the Situation (ESS) to address hot inlet system (HIS) oxygen in-leakage issues (see 12/14/12 weekly). At that time, LANL declared the HIS inoperable. The ESS identifies operational restrictions to ensure tritium is not introduced into the HIS and concludes that the system is in a safe configuration for air in-leakage. In December, the site office concurred that the HIS is safe, provided the system is completely locked and tagged out per LANL requirements, and directed such actions. LASO also directed conduct of a contractor readiness assessment and that the HIS remain locked and tagged until approved by the site office manager.

In December, WETF personnel completed the actions and implemented the controls identified in the ESS and directed by the site office. However, based on questions from the facility representative this week, LANL identified that an Implementation Verification Review was not conducted as required by site procedures to ensure controls were appropriately implemented. Additionally, because the ESS controls were not specifically approved by the site office, questions concerning the status of its controls are also being evaluated.

Area G – Safety Basis: The site office responded to the safety basis strategy submitted by LANL for the Technical Area-54, Area G Basis for Interim Operations (BIO) (see 1/4/13 weekly). The site office response generally agreed with the approach proposed by LANL, but cautioned that the proposed scope of and schedule for the revision was aggressive and could jeopardize timely implementation of the revised BIO. The site office directed LANL to revise the scope of the revision to ensure implementation by September 30, 2013. The site office also directed that when limiting the scope, certain revisions must be made, to include: addressing issues identified in the Board's letter dated November 19, 2012; addressing issues identified in the site office's review of the currently approved BIO; and ensuring deposition velocity is reasonably conservative as directed in a previous site office memorandum to LANL.

Plutonium Facility – Emergency Preparedness: In response to direction from NNSA headquarters, the site office has accelerated plans for a table top emergency exercise for a Plutonium Facility collapse scenario in response to a significant seismic event. An extensive series of table top exercises is planned for February 26, 2013. The site office and LANL are working closely together to select challenging scenarios to ensure preparedness of both site personnel and several outside agencies likely to respond to such an event.

Cognizant System Engineer (CSE) Program: This week, LANL submitted its response and corrective actions to the site office's Fiscal Year 2012 assessment of the CSE program. The assessment found that progress continues to be made in achieving a mature and effective CSE program at LANL. The assessment also identified two findings: 1) CSE required training curricula does not meet all requirements of DOE Order 420.1B; and 2) tracking of corrective actions in response to site office assessments of the CSE program is not fully effective. Corrective actions are being maintained and tracked through the LANL Performance Feedback and Improvement Tracking System.