

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 30, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: C. H. Keilers, Jr.
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Report for Week Ending June 30, 2006

Recommendation 04-2: On Friday (6/30), the staff held a teleconference with DOE and NNSA headquarters and the site on the scope and path-forward for the TA-55 pilot (site rep weekly 6/16/06).

Radioactive Liquid Waste Treatment Facility (RLWTF): On Tuesday (6/27), two workers were injured at the pump house and influent storage facility construction site. The workers were hit by a stairwell segment that was being lifted by a crane and slipped its rigging. LANL immediately suspended hoisting and rigging operations and has been releasing such operations on a case basis. LANL has also launched an investigation. One of the workers remains in critical condition.

Integrated Safety Management: Last week, LANL management reviewed safety-related occurrences during the first 3 weeks of the LANS contract and concluded that their rate and severity are greater than expected. Starting last Friday (6/23), each level of management has taken roughly a day to review the events and to brainstorm corrective actions. LANL management intends to thereby solicit input from all levels of the lab and roll it up to senior management for action in early July.

The NNSA Site Office (LASO) has forwarded to headquarters the LASO and LANL corrective action plans from last year's DOE-SP audit and two Type B accident investigations (site rep weekly 5/26/06). LASO observed that the LANL plan lacks completion dates and that headquarters' corrective actions remain undefined. For their portion, LASO closed several Type B identified needs for expanding federal oversight by citing the conceptual NNSA oversight pilot, which contrarily involves contracting federal oversight. LASO intends to validate closure of LANL corrective actions semiannually.

Waste Operations: LANL will likely curtail transuranic waste shipments to WIPP next week because of an issue found last week with head space gas samples for several hundred debris drums that had been accepted for shipment. The issue involves composite gas samples drawn from multiple waste streams, instead of the required single waste stream, and then sent to Idaho for analysis.

LANL is analyzing the risks of 3 alternatives to address the high-activity drums discussed last week:

- TA-50 WCRR Facility – this facility is WIPP compliant and operational but restricted to 56 Ci by inventory limits in its 6-year-old safety basis; operations involve one air glove-box that will get a ventilation upgrade; WCRR requires drums to be trucked over on-site roads from TA-54.
- TA-54 DVRS Facility – this facility has an inerted glove-box and could be made operational relatively quickly; NNSA imposed more restrictive requirements on it than on WCRR, and it does not meet some requirements, such as redundant nitrogen supply. DVRS is close to drum storage, improving efficiency and reducing on-site transportation risks; however, the glove-box interferes with DVRS down-sizing waste now in ~300 plywood crates, its intended purpose.
- CMR Wing 9 basement enclosures – Wing 9 has two rooms with separate filtration that were used at one time for WIPP waste studies but are now not operational and would need a glovebox (on order); while Wing 9 appears more robust than the other options, it may not be; this option would require trucking drums to near the center of LANL's main population area.