

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 20, 2006

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director  
**FROM:** C. H. Keilers, Jr.  
**SUBJECT:** Los Alamos Report for Week Ending October 20, 2006

The staff, NNSA, and LANL held a video-teleconference on LANL TRU waste operations on Thursday.

**Accident Investigations:** Last week, LANL management signed the accident investigation report for the June CMR hood fire. LANL has also issued a corrective action plan (CAP) for the June RLWTF construction accident; the CAP focuses not only on implementing integrated work management (IWM) but also on improving span-of-control, training, and execution of safety oversight by first line supervisors, managers, and safety professionals (site rep weeklies 9/8/06, 7/14/06).

**Transuranic (TRU) Waste Operations:** LANL has modified the WCRR repackaging facility to ensure reliable glovebox vacuum, a worker safety improvement (site rep weekly 10/14/05). NNSA and LANL have also converged on a path-forward for shipping the 325 highest-activity drums above ground in Area G to WIPP by Spring 2008; these drums contain about a third of the current above-ground inventory (i.e., ~50 kCi). By Oct 30<sup>th</sup>, LANL will propose updated safety bases for WCRR and RANT (the shipping facility) that support one year of high-activity operations. By Jan 2007, LANL will also propose a longer-term strategy for addressing large TRU-contaminated items, now stored in Area G in plywood boxes, as well as the remaining high-activity packages (~90 kCi, 300 Ci avg), which are to be retrieved from underground storage starting in FY-08 (site rep weekly 9/8/06).

**Radioactive Liquid Waste Treatment Facility (RLWTF):** LANL is planning to replace the leaking caustic waste receipt tank during a weekend in November; preparations appear extensive, including the use of a mock-up to prove out processes and procedures (site rep weekly 8/11/06).

**Plutonium Facility (TA-55):** NNSA has not acted on LANL's proposed resolution of discrepancies in the interim technical safety requirements, which LANL declared implemented in August; the key issues involve: • non-robust nuclear material containers used in the vault, which was contaminated in Dec 2005; • Pu-238 residues still stored in the room that was contaminated in Aug 2003. Both of these are linked to still-open NNSA and LANL corrective actions in response to the Aug 2003 Pu-238 uptakes. Particularly, while WIPP recently approved new TRUCON codes and while LANL has disposed of some Pu-238 residues, NNSA and LANL have made little progress in developing packaging standards and addressing the remaining Pu-238 residues, some of which are intermixed with combustibles in poor containers within gradually degrading plastic bags (site rep weekly 6/2/06).

**Los Alamos Neutron Science Center (LANSCE):** On Sep 13<sup>th</sup>, LANL informed NNSA that, pursuant to a DOE General Counsel determination, LANSCE is excluded from the Nuclear Safety Management rule (10 CFR 830) and its PAAA provisions; the Occupational Radiation Protection rule (10 CFR 835) and accelerator order (DOE O 420.2B) apply (site rep weeklies 7/28/06, 9/2/05).

**Institutional Safety Programs:** On Sep 27<sup>th</sup>, LANL issued updated requirements for hazardous energy control for worker safety (i.e., lockout/tagout); this was a key open item from the now-closed Operational Efficiency (OE) project; the need for the update has been recognized for years and was highlighted by several recent near-misses. LANL plans to develop relevant training and modify subcontracts by Dec 1<sup>st</sup>, train workers by Feb 2007, improve hands-on training starting in Mar 2007, and revise facility-specific procedures by Aug 2007 (site rep weeklies 9/15/06, 9/1/06).