



Department of Energy
Albuquerque Operations Office
Los Alamos Area Office
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544

VIA HAND DELIVERY

JUL 09 1999



Mr. John Kieling
Hazardous and Radioactive Materials Bureau
New Mexico Environment Department
2044 Galisteo St., Building A
P.O. Box 26110
Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87505

Dear Mr. Kieling:

Subject: Incident at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) Chemistry and Metallurgy
Research Building, Technical Area 3.

The purpose of this letter is to memorialize the telephone conversation that occurred between you, Alice Barr of the Los Alamos National Laboratory's (LANL) Hazardous and Solid Waste Group, and me on July 6, 1999. You requested that we provide you with the information we discussed in a written form by July 9, 1999.

As you'll recall, our discussion focused on a recent incident at LANL's Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Building, in Technical Area 3. On June 25, 1999, LANL personnel were heating some liquid resulting from a treatability study on a hot plate inside a glovebox. At one point during the day, a technician noticed that a glovebox glove had come off and brown fumes were being emitted from the now-open glovebox port. Based on the hazardous waste codes provided by the generator (Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Facility) that were originally associated with the treatability study samples, and on the procedures performed on the liquid as part of the study, it is unlikely that this liquid was mixed waste. We are, however, reviewing the situation to determine if any hazardous or mixed waste issues may have existed.

As we mentioned, any evaluation that remains cannot occur until the ongoing incident investigation allows personnel access to the contents of the glovebox. While no liquid is left to observe, some solids associated with the study may provide insight into any potential hazardous or mixed waste applicability. Unfortunately, the analytical equipment normally available for characterization of material containing this form of radioactivity is currently inoperable. University of California (UC) staff are pursuing other potential options to assist in the description of this material. UC staff and Department of Energy staff will inform you of any determinations made regarding these issues as soon as they occur.

Please feel free to contact me or Alice Barr at (505) 665-5042 or (505) 667-0820, respectively, if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

[Handwritten Signature]
H. L. "Jody" Plum

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