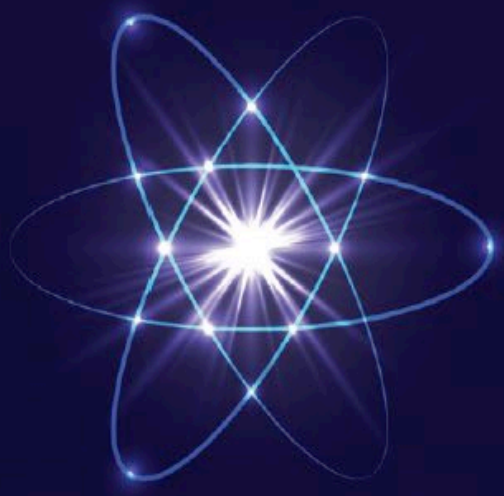
United States Department of Energy

Nuclear Criticality Safety Program (NCSP)

1–Week Manager's Course

Student Information Booklet



NCERC · Oak Ridge National Laboratory · Sandia National Laboratories · Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory · Los Alamos National Laboratory · Y-12 National Security Complex, Managed and Operated by Consolidated Nuclear Security, LLC

U.S. Department of Energy · National Nuclear Security Administration

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Course Description

This Nuclear Criticality Safety Program's (NCSP) class is designed for Managers and Criticality Safety Officers with Nuclear Criticality Safety (NCS) responsibilities, Fissile Material Operators, Regulatory Personnel and Process supervisors. The course is one-week long and is offered at two locations: the National Critical Experiment Research Center (NCERC) and Sandia National Laboratory (SNL/Sandia). The purpose of this course is to provide an experimental hands-on training experience addressing important characteristics of neutron-multiplying systems, which will include: awareness of fissile material in process operations, along with discussion of the theory and implications for safety of fissionable material operations; awareness and understanding of Department of Energy (DOE) mandates developed specifically for fissile material operators, process supervisors, and managers with NCS responsibilities, regarding application of DOE Orders, Guides, Rules, American Nuclear Society (ANS) standards in performance of criticality safety evaluations that meet DOE standards and hazards analysis methods and implementation/maintenance of NCS controls, with respect to the roles and responsibilities of all those who are involved.

A diverse team of instructors, experimenters, and coordinators participate in the conduct of these courses. Individuals from Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Sandia National Laboratory, National Nuclear Security Administration, Los Alamos National Laboratory, and National Security Technologies, LLC, currently participate in the course planning and execution.

Course Schedule

The Manager training with critical assemblies will depend upon your registration choice and clearance level. Uncleared, L- and Q-cleared students can attend the Sandia Hands-on course located at Technical Area 5 (TA-V) at Sandia National Laboratory (SNL/Sandia). Q-cleared students can attend the Hands-on Training at the National Critical Experiment Research Center (NCERC) located at the Device Assembly Facility (DAF) at the Nevada Nuclear Security Site (NNSS), located approximately 65 miles from Las Vegas, NV.

DAF/NCERC Course Schedule

- Monday, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm – Meet in Las Vegas Nevada Support Facility (232 Energy Way) in the Sedan or Great Basin conference room.
- Tuesday, 7:00 am – 5:00 pm – Meet at Mercury Badge Office to enroll in DAF security system; Proceed to the DAF Entry Guard Station (EGS) for the rest of the day
- Wednesday – Thursday, 7:45 am – 5:00 pm - Meet at DAF Entry Guard Station (EGS) to allow time for DAF entry with escorts.
- Friday, 8:00 am – 1 pm – Meet in Las Vegas Nevada Support Facility (232 Energy Way) in the Sedan or Great Basin conference room.
- NOTE: Monday you may bring a lunch or eat in the cafeteria. Tuesday – Thursday, bring a lunch and snacks for breaks. No lunch is provided.
- NOTE: Your badge is needed each day of training. If you are getting a visitors' badge, you will meet at 7:15 am on Monday at the Nevada Field Office badge office.

Please refer to the DAF/NCERC Hands-on Training Logistics section of this document for more information on location and badging.

Sandia Course Schedule

- Monday, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm – Meet at the SRVE Sandia Badge Office
- Tuesday – Thursday, 7:45 am – 5:00 pm – Meet at TA-V, Building 6577

- Friday – 7:45 am – 1:00 pm – Meet at TA-V, Building 6577

Please refer to the Sandia Hands-on Training Logistics section of this document for information on location and badging.

Course Content

The content of the DAF/NCERC and Sandia Manager courses are similar in nature, although the lectures are based on the types of critical assemblies at the location. The course content for each course is provided below.

DAF/NCERC Manager Course

- Review of NCS fundamentals
- Criticality safety standards and DOE regulations
- DOE requirements, national standards, and overview of the DOE Nuclear Criticality Safety Program
- Overview of DOE-STD-3007 and an overview of criticality safety evaluation content
- Experimental methodology introduction
- Training Assembly for Criticality Safety (TACS) experimental methodology
- TACS subcritical experiments
- Overview of reactor physics
- Planet subcritical hand-stacking experimental methodology
- Planet Hands-on operations and approach to critical and critical operations
- Advanced hands-on demonstration with the BeRP ball and the Np sphere
- Flattop critical operations
- Godiva IV critical assembly demonstration
- Review of experimental criticality accidents
- Human factors principles
- International Criticality Safety Benchmark Evaluation Project (ICSBEP) overview

Sandia Manager Course

- Review of NCS fundamentals
- Summary of process and experimental criticality accidents
- Overview of criticality safety evaluations and DOE-STD-3007
- Conduct of operations
- Design of the 7uPCX critical experiments
- Nuclear instrumentation
- Reactor kinetics
- Subcritical multiplication
- Nuclear criticality safety data and limits
- Overview of the ICSBEP
- Human factors principles
- ANSI/ANS-1 operations
- Criticality safety standards and DOE regulations
- Experiment 1-3 – approach to critical on fuel loading, moderator height and fuel separation
- Experiment 4 – Interior fuel rod removal

Completion Requirements

Attendees must complete an examination at the end of the week with a grade of 80% or better. Certificates for successful completion of the course will be emailed to students after the course is completed. Participation is expected from all course attendees. **PLEASE DO NOT PLAN TO LEAVE EARLY OR YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE A CERTIFICATE.**

Students can also provide feedback on all aspects of the course, including content, instructors, classroom characteristics, etc. Feedback is provided to the Course Coordinator who oversees student feedback resolution with the course points-of-contact.

Course Points-of-Contact

Contact information for the 1-week course is listed in the table below. Pre-course questions should be directed to Doug Bowen. Questions during the course can be directed to Doug or the course site points of contact.

Doug Bowen **Course Coordinator** **Course Point-of-Contact (Monday & Friday)**	**(505) 500-7686 (cell)**	**bowendg@ornl.gov**
NCERC Course POCS		
Catherine Percher DAF/NCERC Class Point-of-Contact (Mon-Tuesday)	(925) 423-9345	percher1@llnl.gov
Cole Kostelac DAF/NCERC Class Point-of-Contact (Wed-Thursday)	(505) 667-7242	kostelac@lanl.gov
Nancy Watts Los Alamos National Laboratory Class Point-of-Contact	(505) 629-5104 (cell) (702) 794-5330 (office)	nwatts@lanl.gov
Sandia Course POCs		
David Ames Sandia National laboratory Class Point-of-Contact	(505) 274-2164	deames@sandia.gov
Elijah Lutz Sandia National Laboratory	(505) 844-8272	elutz@sandia.gov
Loretta Rankin Sandia National Laboratory Registration Point-of-Contact	(505) 845-9287	llranki@sandia.gov
Isabel Madrid-Roybal Sandia National Laboratory Registration Point-of-Contact	(505) 284-0587	imadrid@sandia.gov

Prerequisites

This course is designed for Managers with NCS responsibilities, Criticality Safety Managers, Fissile Material Operators, Regulatory Personnel and Process supervisors.

Sandia Hands-on Training Prerequisites

Prior to obtaining unescorted access to TA-V at Sandia National Laboratories, the students **must complete training modules prior to the course**. The Sandia Manager's course point-of-contact will provide registered students the training modules required to attend the course along with instructions to complete them.

DAF/NCERC Hands-on Training Prerequisites

The DAF/NCERC hands-on training class requires students to handle significant quantities of fissionable material to participate in the hands-on portions of the class, e.g., Planet critical assembly uranium foil hand stacking, handling the plutonium BeRP ball, and Neptunium sphere. To come to the NNSS and handle fissile materials, **Radworker II training (or equivalent training) is required**. For many people, this is the first time they have ever held significant quantities of uranium and plutonium. Thus, Rad Worker II training (or equivalent training) is required to attend the course. Currently, equivalency has been established for Radworker II for the following sites: LLNL, LANL, SNL, Pantex, Savannah River, PNNL, Y-12, ORNL, NFS, AMWTP Idaho, and INL. You will be asked by the course planners to provide proof of your Rad Worker II certification to allow your credentials to be accepted at DAF/NCERC.

Site Specific Information

Sandia Hands-on Training Course Logistics

Sandia Badge Information

If your badge has not been enrolled in the Sandia system, you **MUST** go to the SRVE Building (Badging office) on the first day.

SRVE Building
10700 Research Rd. SE
Albuquerque, NM 87123

This is a requirement of Kirtland AFB. You will need to bring the following with you:

- HSPD-12 Badge (If you have one)
- Driver's License
- Passport Not required- US Citizen
- Passport *Required* for Foreign Nationals
- Car Registration
- Proof of Insurance
    - (If the vehicle is a rental car), rental car agreement or receipt.
- Mask – currently masks are optional for all entering SNL's Badge Office and Onsite.
- Be prepared to lock up your cell phone in your car or available lock box in 6577.
- Please be advised that the classroom may occasionally be on the cooler side, it is recommended to bring a light sweater for your comfort during class.

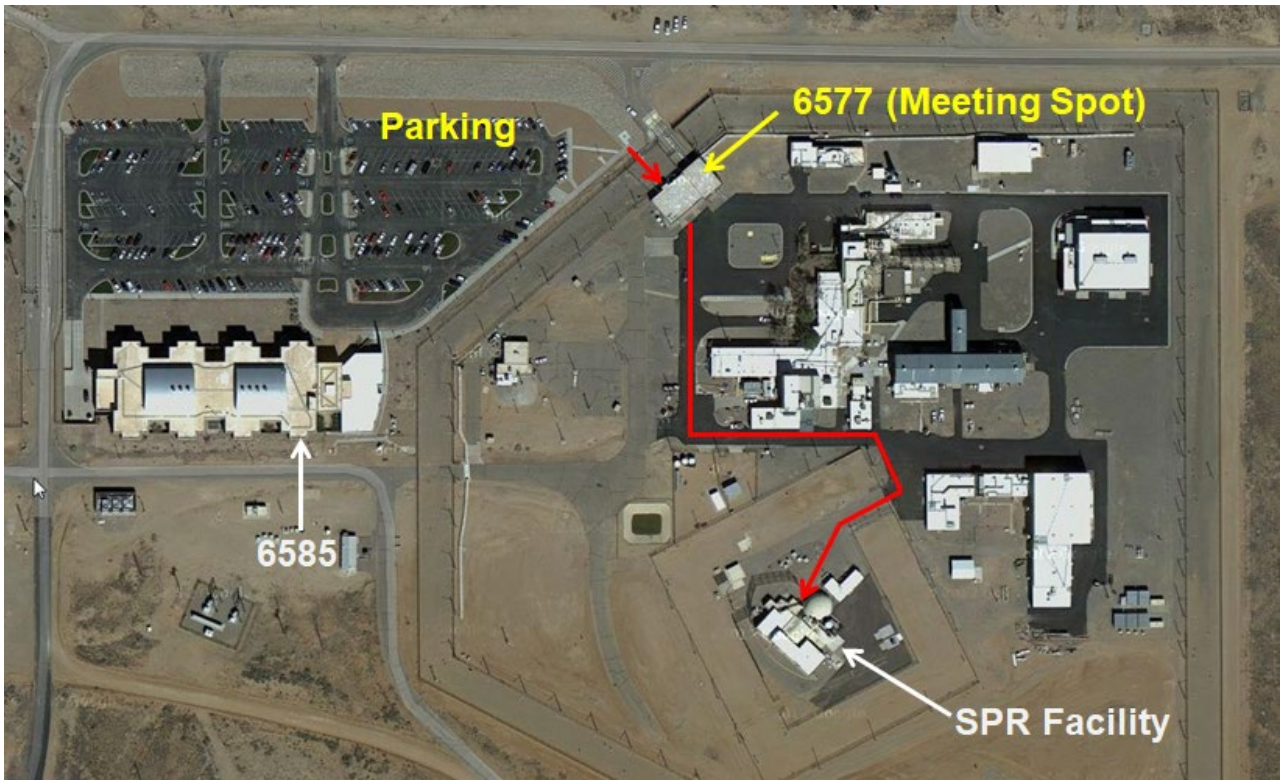
- It is a good idea to bring a lunch and snacks because Tech Area 5 is far into the base with limited options on places to eat.

Sandia staff will guide all visitors through the badging process. While at SRVE (Badging office) Staff will distribute a card with a BAL number on it for base access at the Eubank gate., the class will then proceed to TA-V for the course.

DIRECTIONS: SRV to TA-V

- Upon exiting SRVE – Turn Right onto Innovation Pkwy.
- Turn Right at stop sign (only direction you can go), immediately get into left lane.
- Turn at first left (light) to access gate. Turn Left.
- Once past the gate, stay to your left and make left at light. (**20th St**)
- Follow **20th St.** Bear right as it turns into **Hardin Dr. SE**
- **Turn Left – Wyoming Blvd SE**
- **Turn Left – Pennsylvania Ave SE**
- You will pass the KAFB Golf Course (on left) and come upon the RV Park.
- **Turn Right – Airbase Way** (directly across from RV Park) There will be a large blue sign "TA-V Sandia National Laboratories"
- Follow Airbase Way (bearing to your right). TA-V will be on your left (6582 is in the fenced area.) A Sandia POC will meet you at **6577**, the entry building.

Google Maps: Search "Sandia National Laboratories Tech Area V" for GPS directions. See figure below for parking and meeting location at Tech Area V.



Parking and Meeting Location at Tech Area V

Sandia Prohibited Items

As described above, during the class, we will be in a Limited Area (LA). As at all U.S. Department of Energy facilities, each area has a long list of items that are not allowed with the LA being the most restricted. Examples of prohibited items are listed below. Please be aware that **upon entering or leaving Sandia premises, all personnel are subject to search of their persons, hand-carried items, and vehicles**.

Items that are ALWAYS prohibited at Sandia:

- Firearms
- Explosives, pyrotechnics, propellants
- Illegal drugs & paraphernalia, intoxicants
- Other items prohibited by law

Examples of items prohibited in the Limited Area (e.g. during our operations at the critical experiments):

- Personally owned electronic equipment
- Radio frequency transmitting equipment including Bluetooth devices, Wi-Fi devices, and pagers with transmitters
    - *NOTE: If you have personal medical electronic devices such as Bluetooth hearing aids, Bluetooth glucose monitors, Bluetooth insulin pumps, etc. please notify* ncspteam@ornl.gov *and the person coordinating access to the site*.
- Recording equipment (audio, video, data)
- Computers and peripherals
- Removable computer media
- Cell phones or other cellular network devices
- Portable electronics including hand-held computing devices
- Non-Sandia owned devices

There is a lock box just inside the front door of Building 6577 that you can use.

Lodging and Dining in Albuquerque

SNL is located on Kirkland Air Force Base a few miles from the Albuquerque International Airport. A wide variety of hotels are available very close to the laboratory.
See https://www.visitalbuquerque.org/ for Albuquerque lodging/dining options.

Sandia Maps/Directions

Directions to the SRVE Building from the Airport

From the Airport, take I-25 north to I-40 east to the Eubank exit. Turn right [south] to the end of Eubank – where Eubank makes a bend to the right [west] just before the base gate. Turn left on Innovation Pkwy, the light just before the gate and proceed just beyond Research Rd (see map below). Look for the sign for the Sandia Badge Office.

Map of the Sandia Badge Office

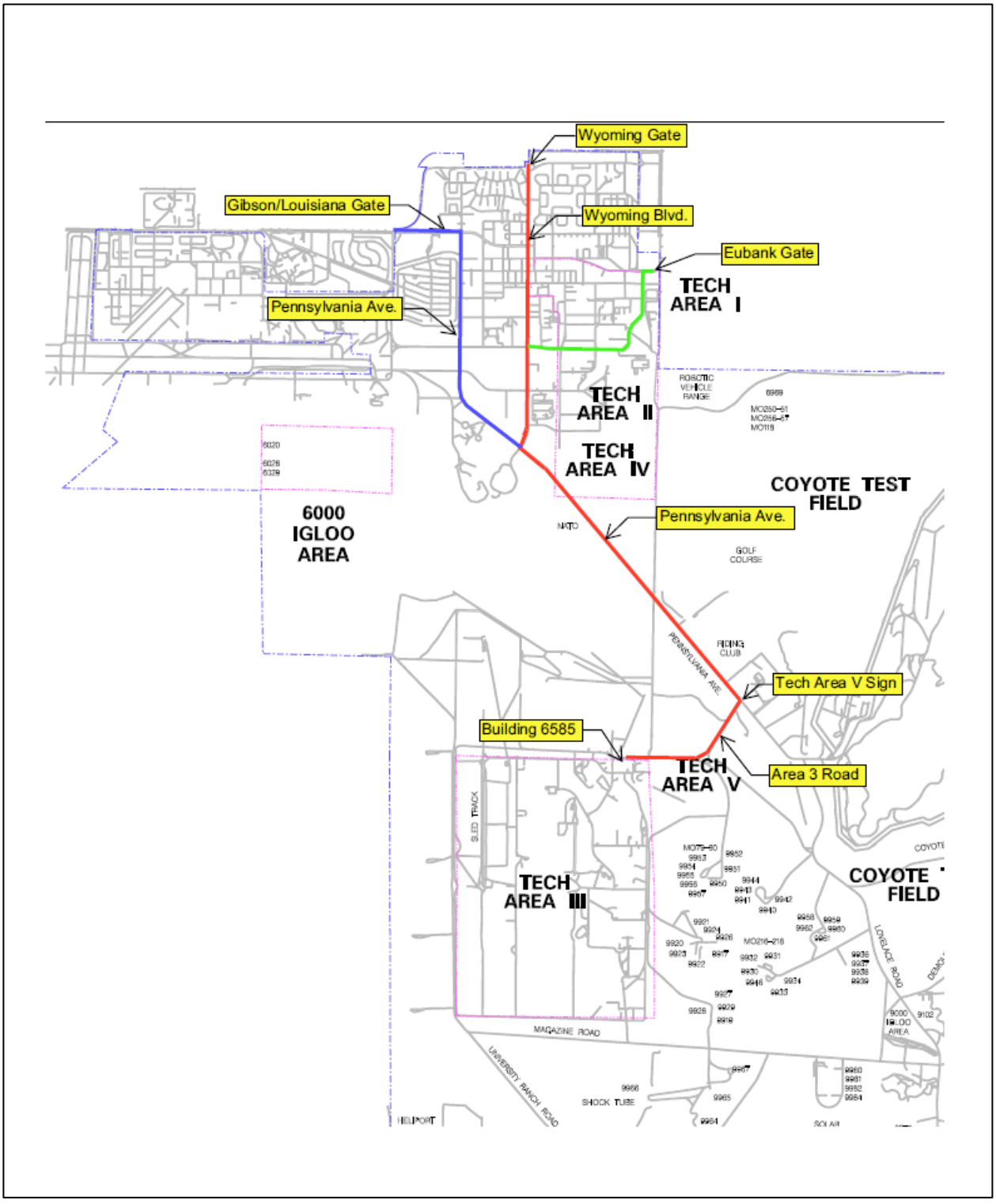
New SNL Badge office

March 2026

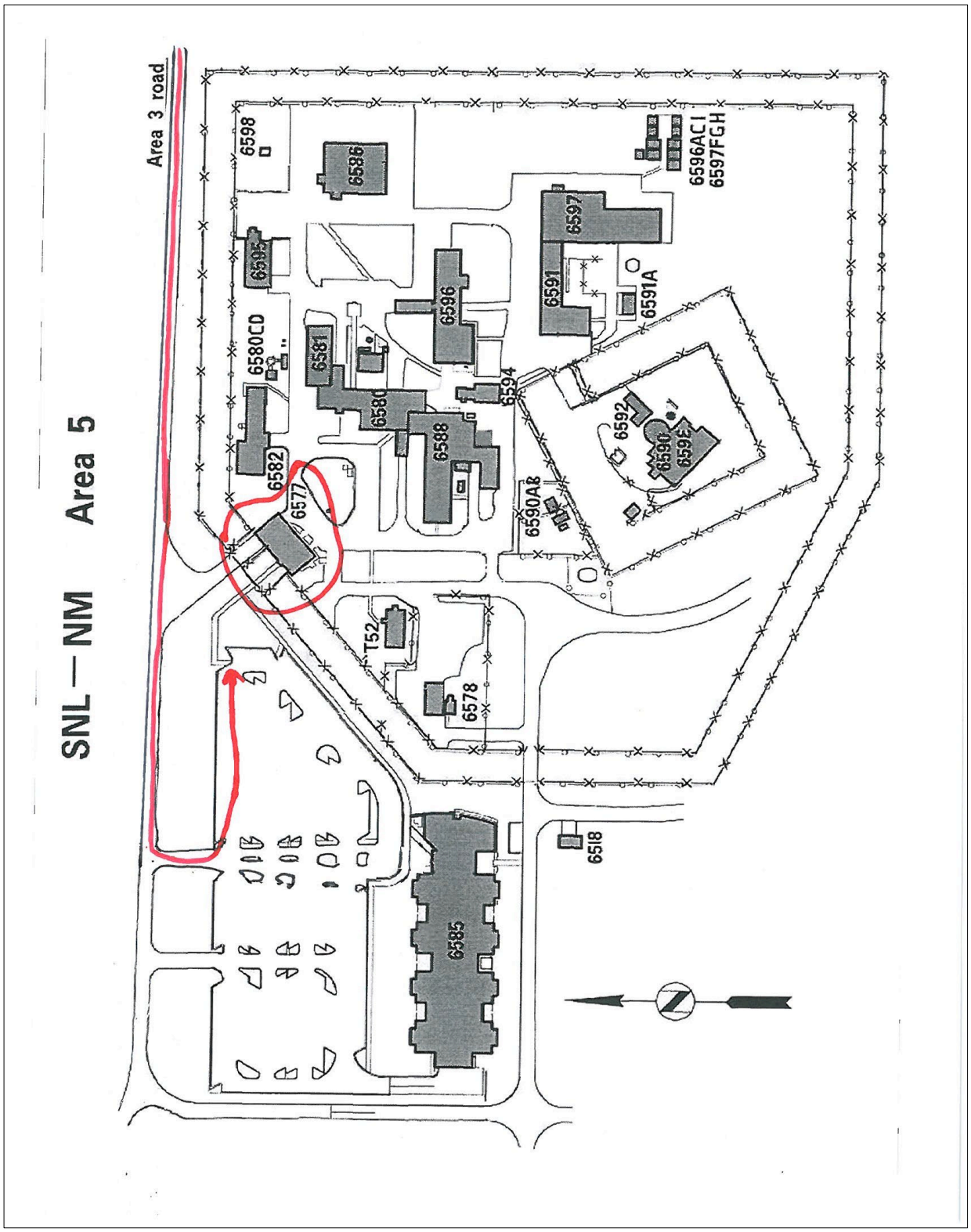
Red indicates path to SRVE

Blue line indicates path from SRVE to the Eubank gate.

Getting to Tech Area V (TA-V) from all Kirtland AFB Gates



Sandia Technical Area 5 (TA-V) Map



National Atomic Testing Museum (NATM) Classroom Training Logistics

The classroom portion of the 1-week Manager/Criticality Safety Officer hands-on Course is offered may be held at the NATM. This is the preferred location for the classroom lectures on Monday and Friday because there is no need for special access or badging needs. The course will be executed Tuesday through Thursday at DAF/NCERC.

NATM Classroom Training Logistics

NATM Location

The address of the NATM is 755 E. Flamingo Rd., Las Vegas, NV 89119. The phone number for the NATM is (702) 794-5151. Information about the NATM can be found at the following website address: http://nationalatomictestingmuseum.org/.

NATM Badge Information

No additional paperwork is required for access to the NATM. You will not need your badge for the classroom portion at the NATM; however, it will be needed for the second week of the 2-week Hands-on Course at either the DAF/NCERC or SNL.

NATM Cell Phones and Laptops

Cell phones, even those with cameras, are allowed.

Please bring your personal or work-issued laptop to the classroom. Before the class begins you will be sent PDFs of course material and process accidents to be used in the class.

NATM Prohibited Articles

As with all DOE sites, illicit drugs, explosives, and firearms are prohibited.

Traveling to the NATM

NATM Flight Information

The closest airport is Las Vegas Harry Reid International Airport (airport code LAS). You will need to fly in on Sunday (the day before the course starts) as the course will begin early on Monday morning. Do not plan to fly home until Friday evening or Saturday, since Friday's course could last until 2:00-3:00 pm.

NATM Rental Car Information

A rental car is a must for attendance at the class. Most hotels in Las Vegas provide free parking (some provide free valet).

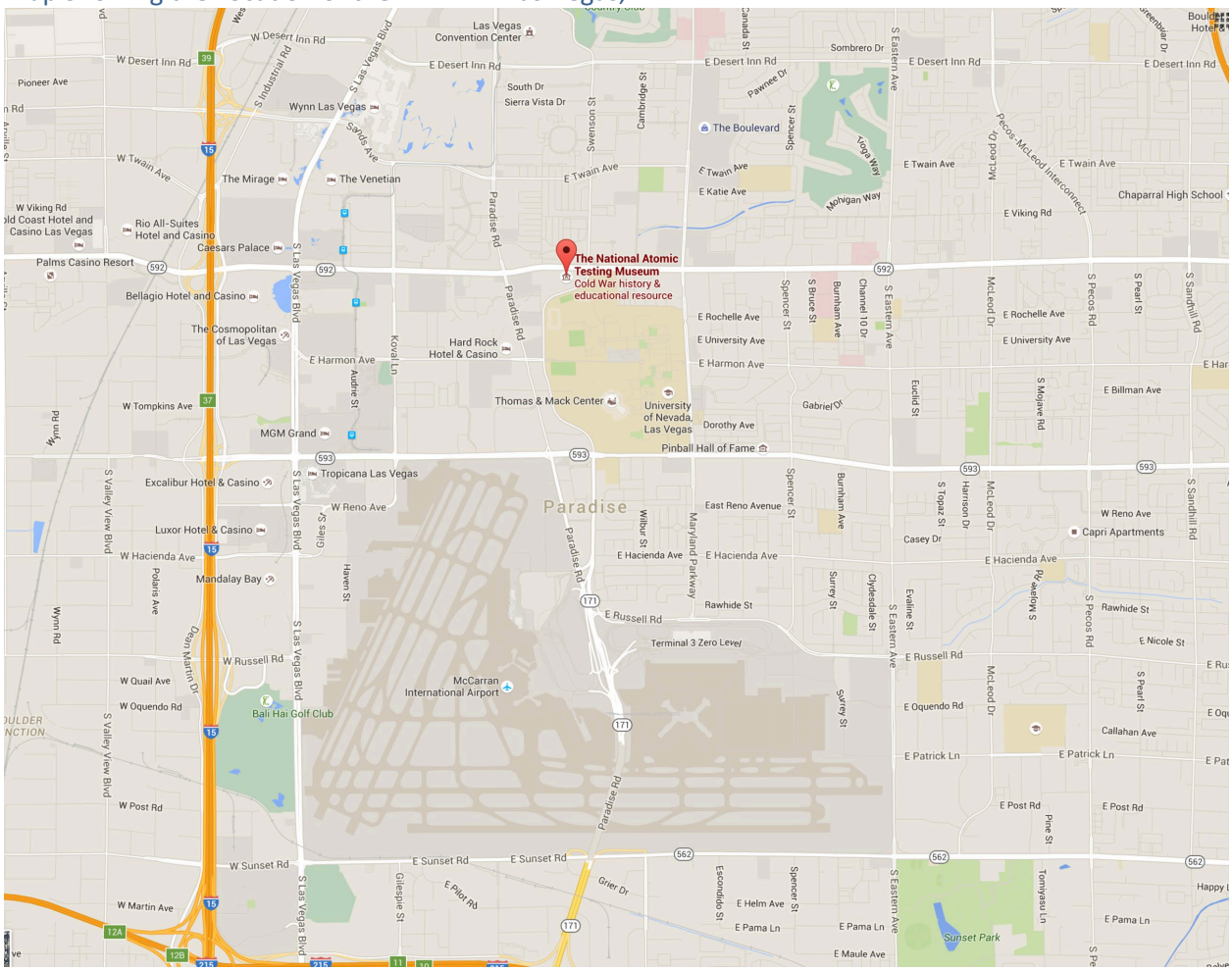
NATM Lodging Information

Las Vegas

Las Vegas is usually the lodging location of choice for visitors. There are a plethora of hotels, entertainment, and dining options to choose from in Las Vegas. Many of the hotels offer rates below per diem (currently for FY2016 at $99), although some do charge add-on "resort fees" (up to $25/day), which may or may not be reimbursable by your travel department if they cause your lodging to be over per diem. The website www.vegas.com will allow you to easily compare rates at hotels in Las Vegas. Note that these rates DO NOT include the resort fees.

The NATM located off the Las Vegas strip just north of the McCarran Airport – see the map below.

Map Showing the Location of the NATM in Las Vegas, NV



Nevada Field Office (NFO)/Nevada Support Facility (NSF) Classroom Training Logistics

If the lecture days of the course on Monday and Friday cannot be scheduled, the course may be held at the NFO in the NSF. The course will be executed Tuesday through Thursday at DAF/NCERC.

Location

The address of the NFO/NSF is 232 Energy Way, Las Vegas, Nevada.

Badge Information

Refer to the DAF/NCERC Hands-on Training Course Logistics Badging Section.

Cell Phones and Laptops

Cell phones, even those with cameras, are allowed. However, no cell phones are allowed in cleared buildings or areas. Taking pictures is not allowed inside the security area.

Please bring your personal or work-issued laptop to the classroom. Before the class begins, you will be provided with material you will download to your laptop and use in the class.

Prohibited Articles

Prohibited articles include:

- Illicit drugs
- Firearms
- Explosives
- Stand-alone cameras
- Binoculars
- Spotting scopes
- Telescopes

Traveling to the NSO/NSF

Refer to the DAF/NCERC Travel Logistics Section and Maps.

DAF/NCERC Hands-on Training Course Logistics

General Information

The NCERC is a U.S. Government-owned research center located at the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS). It is operated by Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) for the National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA) Nuclear Criticality Safety Program (NCSP).

There is no cafeteria at the DAF, so it is recommended that you bring your own lunch and snacks. Refrigerators and microwaves are available in the NCERC control room along with coffee makers and water stations.

Badging

Students need to meet Tuesday morning at 7:00 am sharp at the Mercury Badge Office to allow for enrollment in the DAF security system.

The Mercury badge office (NNSS) is located on Mercury highway (take the Mercury exit from US-95 N). The badge office will be on your right, just before the guard station. An escort will meet you at the badge office to assist with badging and answer any questions. Please tell the badge office that you will be going to the DAF and require a PIN number and biometrics setup. Upon completion at the badge office, the escort must call DAF Operations Control and tell them the names of the people that are coming to the DAF.

You will need to bring your HSPD-12 badge (see example figure below) with a working magnetic strip (on the back) and gold chip (on the front). Contact your badge office if you have any questions about the functionality of your badge. Your point-of-contact will let you know if any additional documentation is required.

What an HSPD-12 Badge looks like

Dosimeters and Radiation Doses

We will issue you a dosimeter on Monday morning. You must wear the dosimeter whenever you are in DAF. It should be worn above the waist with the window facing outwards. You will leave the dosimeters at DAF each night. We will collect the dosimeters on Thursday afternoon at the site. You will not need a dosimeter on Friday.

Radiation doses for the class are expected to be low. All critical experiments will be conducted in a shielded part of the facility to protect you from excessive doses. However, you will be handling fissile material, so you will receive some radiation dose. You will not receive more than 10 mrem during the entire week of the class, and your actual dose is likely to be much lower. At the end of the year, you will get a report of your dose from the NNSS contractor based on your dosimeter readings.

Prohibited Articles

You will be asked daily if you have any prohibited articles by the guards at the first guard station. The following items are **prohibited** on the NNSS:

- Illicit drugs
- Firearms
- Explosives
- Stand-alone cameras
- Binoculars
- Spotting scopes
- Telescopes

The following items are prohibited in the DAF:

- Weapons of any kind (includes knives)
- Key Fobs

- Cell phones (personal **and** government)
- Smart watches and fitness trackers
- Spark producing devices (Lighters)
- Personal computer equipment (including USB drives)
- Radiation Generating Device keys (XRS, Betatron, Neutron Generator)

As a best practice, minimize what you bring into the DAF. Double check your bags and pockets for prohibited items before attempting to come through the Entry Guard Station (EGS). The accidental introduction of a prohibited item can significantly impact to your visit. It is also a best practice to minimize the amount of metal you wear into the DAF. If you have items that are prohibited in the DAF, you can leave them in your vehicle or in one of the lock boxes outside the DAF EGS.

Information on Things to Bring

- Your badge! If you forget your badge, you might miss out on a day or more of the class.
- Composite safety shoes and safety glasses if you have them (not required)
- A lunch for our experimental days (Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday). Monday you may bring a lunch or eat in the cafeteria.
- A calculator or laptop with spreadsheet software for homework (please leave in your car if you bring it onsite)

Dress Code

We will be in the lab Monday through Thursday. You need to wear long pants and sturdy, close-toed shoes (tennis shoes, boots, or leather shoes) and safety glasses with side shields. Safety shoes are required in the DAF. You are welcome to bring your own safety shoes, or NCERC can provide safety shoe covers. Keep in mind that steel-toed safety shoes must be removed when passing through the DAF EGS. You can also bring your own safety glasses, or NCERC can provide a pair in you prefer.

Buildings inside the DAF can have large variations in temperatures. Anywhere between 55^{o}F and 80^{o}F is possible. It is recommended that you dress in layers for your comfort. Also keep in mind that the temperature outside at the NNSS can be extreme.

Travel Onsite at NNSS

The last section of this guide includes maps of the NNSS, Mercury, Las Vegas (to locate the Nevada Support Facility), and of the Nevada Support Facility. Most digital maps will not provide directions from Las Vegas to Mercury, NV. You can look for directions to Indian Springs, NV, and continue on US-95 N through Indian Springs for ~19 miles to the Mercury highway exit. Take this exit, and you should see signs notifying you that you are entering the NNSS. Travel Onsite at NNSS

After the badge office, drive through the guard station on Mercury highway. Continue driving through Mercury Base Camp toward the forward areas. The DAF is a large white building that is ~25 mi (25 – 30 min) past Mercury that will be on your left. Unfortunately, the DAF access road is not well marked, so keep an eye out. If you are heading to another NCERC facility, please follow your escort or the directions provided by your point-of-contact.

The NNSS has many interesting sites scattered throughout the desert, but as a visitor, you are not allowed to drive around site seeing. Please only drive to and from the NCERC facility you are visiting. Do not attempt to drive off-road, and do not pick up anything on the site to take for a souvenir.

Obey all posted speed limits on the NNSS. The highways on the NNSS are patrolled by the Nye County Sheriff. They are authorized to issue citations for speeding.

There is also a lot of wildlife on the NNSS. Do not disrupt or feed any of the wildlife. If you happen to see a desert tortoise in the road, wait for it to cross (picking them up can cause them to urinate and dehydrate themselves).

DAF/NCERC Travel Logistics

Travel Information to Las Vegas

The closest airport is Las Vegas Harry Reid International Airport (airport code LAS). You will need to fly in on Sunday (the day before the course starts) as the course will begin early on Monday morning. The course will conclude around 1:00 pm on Friday.

Travel Information to the NNSS (DAF/NCERC) from Las Vegas

Travel to and from the NNSS and NCERC are not provided. A personal or rental vehicle is required. Visitors may carpool if they wish.

The commute between Las Vegas and NNSS is quite long and has spotty cellular coverage, so plan accordingly. Monitor your fuel level during your commute, as no fuel is available after you leave Indian Springs. A best practice is never let you fuel level go below 1/3 of a tank of fuel available.

Indian Springs is a small town between Las Vegas and NNSS (across from Creech Air Force Base) and the speed limit drops from 70 to 45 mph. Many people visiting the NNSS have been pulled over for speeding through this town, so keep an eye on your speed.

Rental Car Information

The rental car facility is offsite from Harry Reid International Airport, so you will need to take a free shuttle. The shuttle picks up outside the doors of baggage claim, there are signs leading to the pick-up location.

Lodging Information

Las Vegas is usually the lodging location of choice for visitors to the NNSS. There are a plethora of hotels, entertainment, and dining options to choose from in Las Vegas. Many of the hotels offer rates below per diem although some do charge add-on “resort fees” which may or may not be reimbursable by your travel department The travel time from your hotel to the DAF varies depending on where in Las Vegas you stay. Below are some commute estimates, this is for the early morning when there is little to no traffic. Expect the times to be longer on the trip back to Las Vegas, especially if you decide to stay on the Strip.

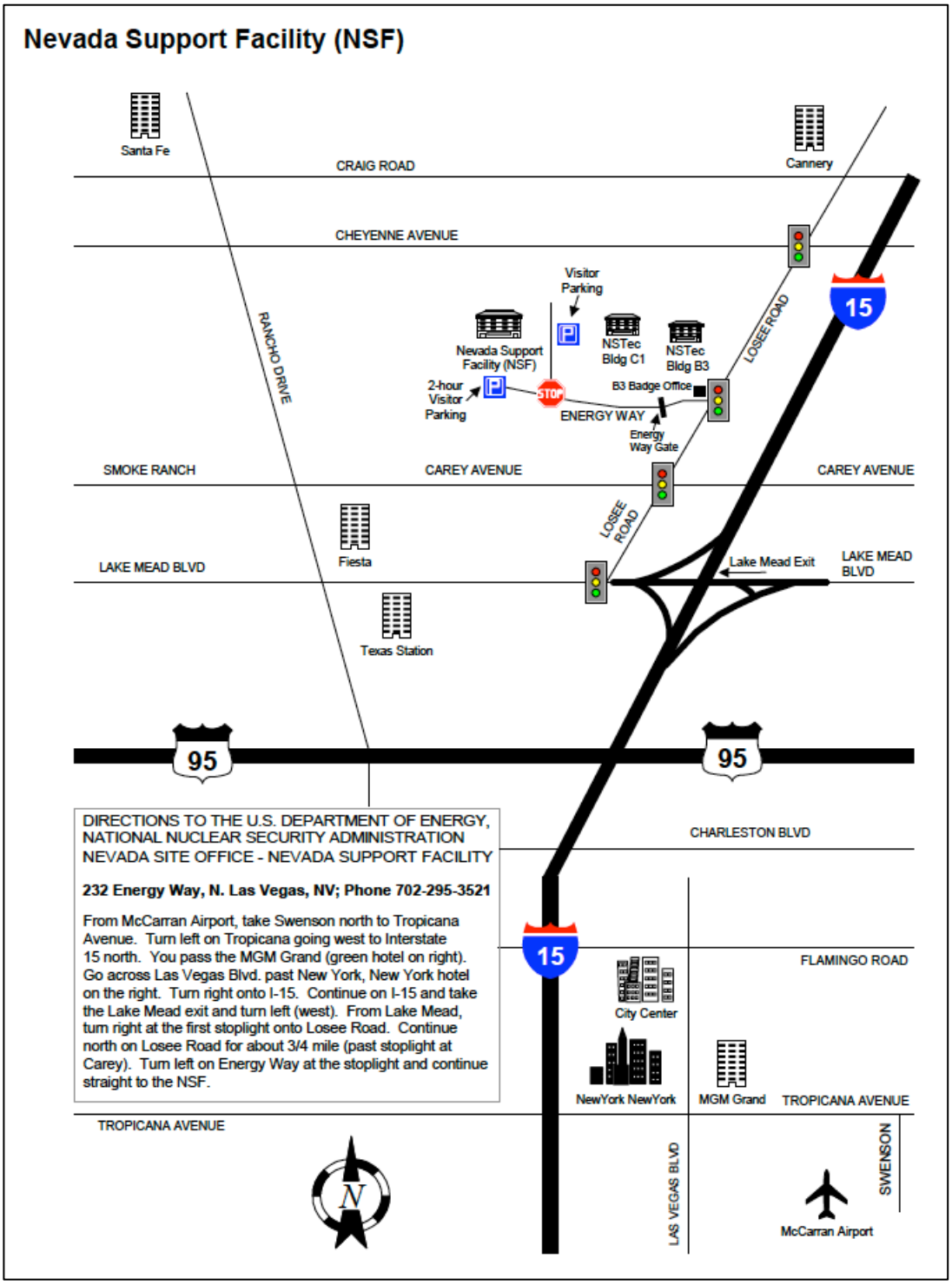
- Las Vegas Strip (Las Vegas Blvd.): Travel time to Mercury is ~75 min and to the DAF is ~100 min.
- North Las Vegas: Travel time to Mercury is ~65 min and to the DAF is ~90 min

The NNSS does have dorm rooms available in Mercury. The rooms are standard motel-type rooms with internet access and cable TV. The Mercury cafeteria is the only option for onsite dining (cafeteria hours are listed below). With your badge, you can freely leave the site 24 hours a day and emergency medical services are available. Rooms are $40 per night. Email nnsshousing@nv.doe.gov if you wish to book a room at the dorms.

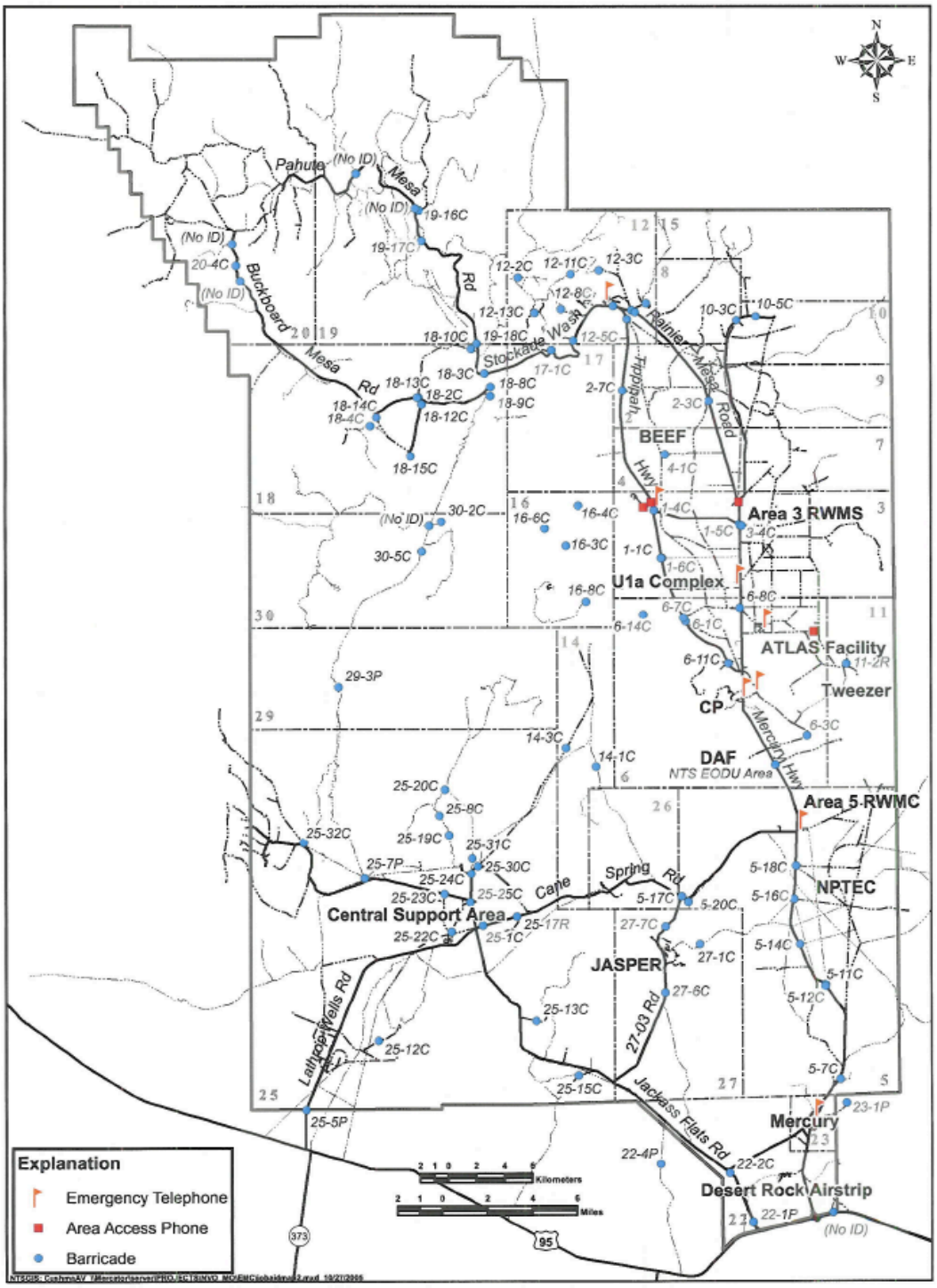
- Breakfast (M-Th): 0530 – 0730
- Lunch (M-Th): 1045 – 1300
- Snack (M-Th): 1330 – 1530
- Dinner (M-W): 1645 – 1900

Maps of NSF/NSO, NNSS, DAF/NCERC and Mercury

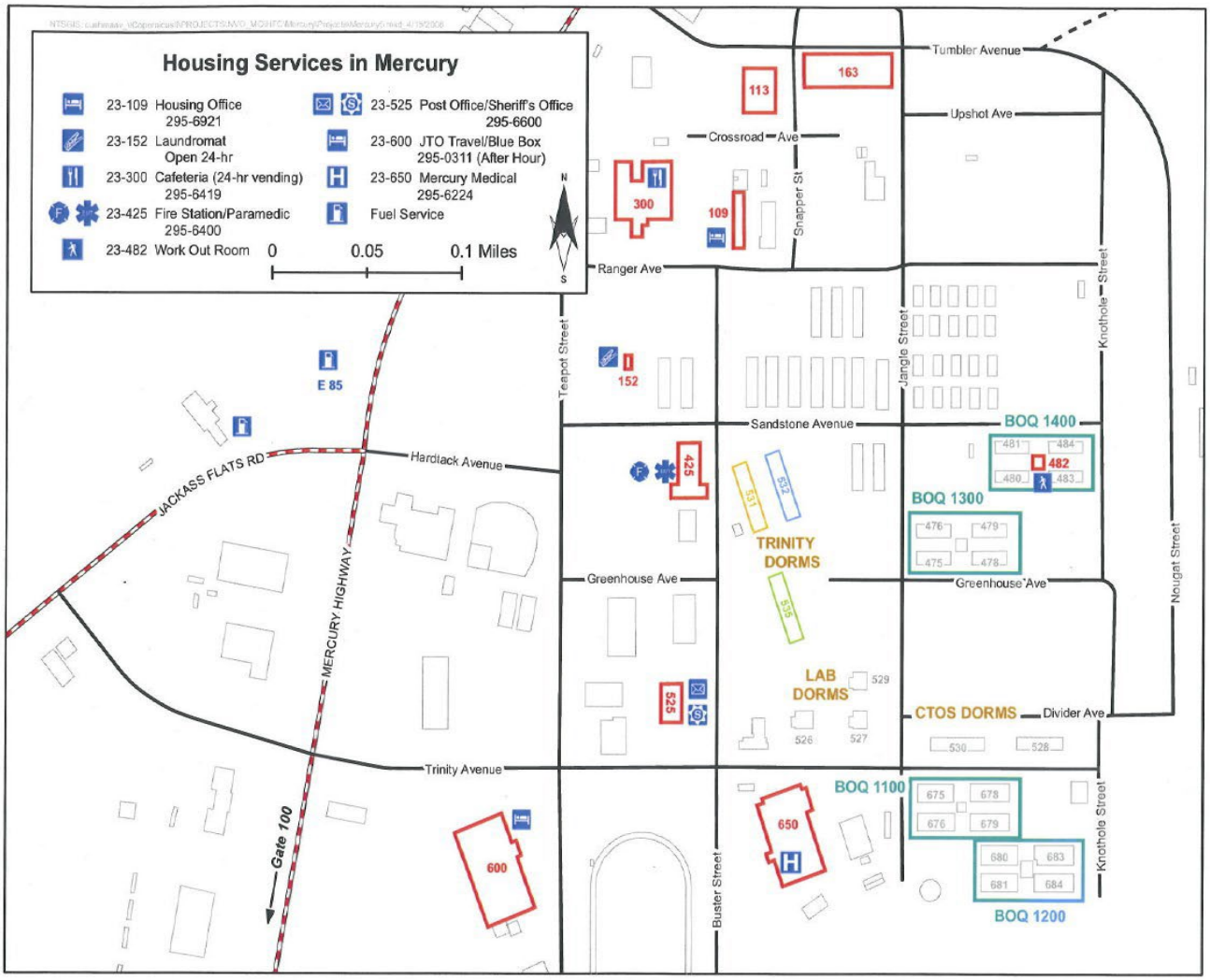
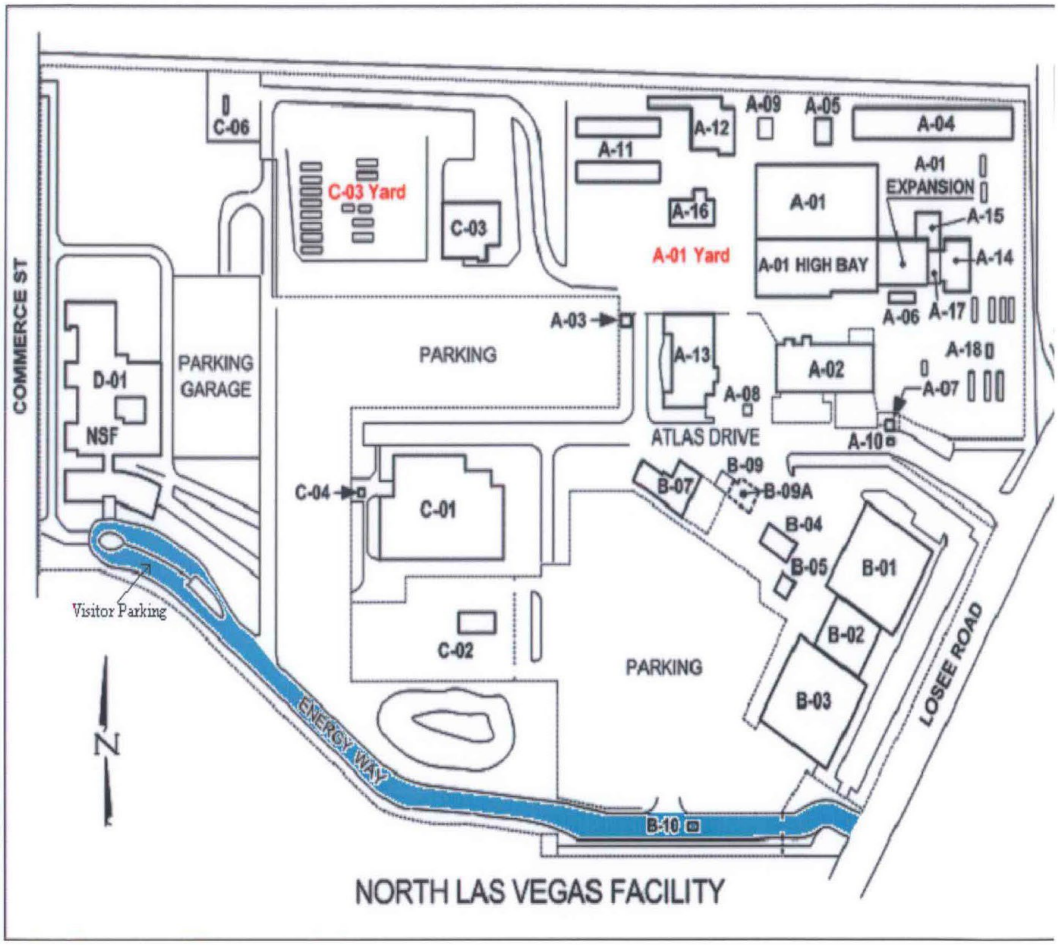
Las Vegas (shows Nevada Support Facility (NSF))



Nevada National Security Site (NNSS) Map (Mercury and the DAF)



Mercury


Housing Services in Mercury
23-109 Housing Office 295-6921
23-152 Laundromat Open 24-hr
23-300 Cafeteria (24-hr vending) 295-6419
23-425 Fire Station/Paramedic 295-6400
23-482 Work Out Room
23-525 Post Office/Sheriff's Office 295-6600
23-600 JTO Travel/Blue Box 295-0311 (After Hour)
23-650 Mercury Medical 295-6224
Fuel Service
0 0.05 0.1 Miles
N
S
Tumbler Avenue
Upshot Ave
Crossroad Ave
Ranger Ave
Sandstone Avenue
Greenhouse Ave
Trinity Avenue
Divider Ave
Hardtack Avenue
JACKASS FLATS RD
MERCURY HIGHWAY
Gate 100
Teapot Street
Snapper St
Jangle Street
Knothole Street
Nougat Street
Buster Street
E 85
113
163
300
109
152
425
525
600
650
TRINITY DORMS
LAB DORMS
CTOS DORMS
BOQ 1400
BOQ 1300
BOQ 1100
BOQ 1200

Nevada Support Facility (NSF)