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Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

December 30, 1993

The Honorable John T. Conway
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mr. Conway,

The Department is aggressively working to improve the quality of Facility Representatives at all of our defense nuclear facilities. We are using the good practices and lessons learned from our best programs to promote excellent programs across the DOE complex. Additionally, we are integrating our actions in response to 92-2 with the efforts of the Department in response to 93-3 addressing technical training. The training and qualification of Facility Representatives is a focused example of our approach to improving the technical competence of all Departmental personnel.

Attached is the quarterly status report summarizing the actions taken in response to 92-2. We have now established a strong core of working members from all of the affected Secretarial Officers and from each of the Field Organizations. We anticipate strong progress toward achieving our objectives in the areas of Facility Representatives and conduct of operations in 1994.

Sincerely,



Donald W. Pearman Jr., Acting
Associate Deputy Secretary
for Field Management

Attachment

STATUS REPORT
ON THE ACTION PLAN TO STRENGTHEN THE FACILITY REPRESENTATIVE
PROGRAM AT DOE DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES

I. INTRODUCTION

This is the second quarterly report which provides the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) with the status of implementing improvements to the Department's Facility Representative program in response to Recommendation 92-2.

II. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACTIONS

The revised action for Recommendation 92-2 was approved and promulgated to the field in September, 1993. A copy was officially sent to the Board on September 30, 1993 along with the last quarterly report. The action plan addresses improvements in three major areas: 1.) personnel and staffing issues, 2.) duties and responsibilities, and 3.) training and qualification. The first two areas are primarily programmatic issues, and are being addressed through a complex-wide effort to standardize the Department's practices in those areas. Once the Department establishes a standard model that is appropriate and meets all of our objectives, then we can benchmark that model at all sites. This will promote consistency and will maximize our improvement efficiency. The area of training and qualification is more complex. The Department is working to establish a training and qualification "pipeline" that Facility Representatives will complete, but that is only the beginning. Once the curriculum and training programs are established, then we must train and qualify all of our Facility Representatives. This will be an ongoing process and will require the most attention from headquarters. There are very specific items in the action plan that address the steps that will be taken to make improvements in the area of training and qualification. These efforts will result in a Department-wide qualification standard for certain core elements that all Facility Representatives will be required to attain, and then we will work to develop facility-specific qualification standards to meet the diverse needs of the individual activities.

In November, 1993 the Department conducted a working group comprised of representatives from all of the affected headquarters organizations (DP, EM, ER, FM, HR, NE) and a number of representatives from the field (SR, AL, CH, NV, Pantex). The group developed program guidelines that were determined to be the minimum standard for all successful Facility Representative programs. These guidelines were submitted to FM-1 for approval and publication. On December 2, 1993, FM-1 published the *Facility Representative Program Guidelines* and tasked each field organization to assess their Facility Representative program against the guidelines. In parallel, FM-1 is performing field baseline assessments to determine where the Facility Representative programs stand relative to the program guidelines. The baseline assessments are a "snapshot" look at the Facility Representative program taken over a short period of time (2-5 days) that will be used to validate the assessment performed by the field. The results of the assessments will be used as a tool to help the Department prioritize and focus our resources on the most critical areas first.

Headquarters baseline assessments have been performed at five sites to date (Hanford, Fernald, Nevada, Brookhaven, LLNL). The assessment teams draw representatives from all of the affected Secretarial Officers and assess Facility Representatives from a variety of different programs. The assessment teams use a methodology similar to that used in EM for the Operations Assessments. Additionally, since the Operations Assessment program is focused on training Facility Representatives to monitor and oversee conduct of operations, the success of one program will help build success in the other. The Department is confident that having FM administer the Facility Representative program will cause each field organization to operate one unified Facility Representative program. This will minimize differences in the quality of Facility Representatives at facilities operated by different Secretarial Officers. All of these measures will help to ensure that all of the defense nuclear facilities are staffed with Facility Representatives that meet the high expectations of the Department.

On October 15, 1993, the Department distributed the draft of the *Facility Representative Personnel Guide* for review and comment by the field and headquarters. All comments have been received and are in the resolution process. The personnel guide includes model position descriptions, selection criteria, recruitment / retention techniques and incentives. It is anticipated that the approved guide will be available for use by May, 1994.

Another output of the working group held in November, 1993 was a set of performance indicators to measure the success of the Facility Representative program. In addition, the group determined that it may take one to two years to see noticeable improvement in some of the indicators, and therefore decided to develop a set of "status indicators" to measure the progress of implementing the Facility Representative program. Most of the status indicators were measures of putting in place the requirements expressed in the Facility Representative Program Guidelines.

The Department has begun the identification of core training requirements for all Facility Representatives. FM, in coordination with HR and the field, will use these core training requirements to develop a Department-wide qualification standard for all Facility Representatives. In parallel, HR has been evaluating all of the courses currently being taught to Facility Representatives. Once the standard is issued, FM and HR will determine which, if any, of the courses contribute to attaining the knowledge, skills, and abilities identified in the qualification standard. In addition, the Department has been investigating the possibility of working with the intern program to recruit and train assistant Facility Representative candidates.

III. SUMMARY

The Department is working aggressively to establish sound Facility Representative programs at all of our field sites. The establishment of solid programs for recruitment, selection, training, and qualification will lead to the development of technically competent Facility Representatives at all of our defense nuclear facilities.