

[DOE LETTERHEAD]

December 28, 1995

The Honorable John T. Conway
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, N.W.
Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in response to your letter to the Secretary of [December 5, 1995](#) requesting the status of Department of Energy activities to revise the Manual of Functions, Assignments and Responsibilities for Nuclear Safety (FAR Manual).

In the Department's Implementation Plan for Board Recommendation 94-5, we committed to revise the FAR Manual by February 1, 1996, or 60 days after promulgation of the rules. The Department expects to issue final nuclear safety rules (10 CFR Parts 830 and 834) by March 31, 1996. However, the Department shares the Board's concern that the avoidance of confusion regarding allocation of functions and responsibilities is an important issue. Accordingly, we are applying best efforts to complete a draft revision by February 1, 1996, for submission to you for review and comment.

The Office of Environment, Safety and Health has the lead responsibility to produce, update, and control the FAR Manual, with input from Headquarters and Field elements. Program offices will continue to develop line management plans that further delineate how they will coordinate and manage safety and assign responsibilities between line Headquarters and Field elements.

To assist in its development, the Department formed a FAR Manual revision Steering Group, chaired by Orin Pearson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Nuclear and Facility Safety. The Steering Group is comprised of senior management from the Offices of Environment, Safety and Health, Defense Programs, Environmental Management, Nuclear Energy, Energy Research, Field Management, Fossil Energy, Human Resources, and General Counsel. Although not all of these offices have nuclear safety functions and responsibilities, they share a common interest in appropriate safety management for DOE activities. The Steering Group will make decisions and provide direction to a Working Group formed to develop a revised FAR Manual. This Group, which is a subset of the Steering Group and other selected members with responsibility for the FAR Manual, will also ensure that effective implementing actions are accomplished as soon as possible. Implementing actions would include further guidance on Headquarters and Field functions and responsibilities, and Department-wide workshops or training on these functions and responsibilities relative to new standards-based safety management planning activities within the Department. The Working Group is scheduled to submit a revised draft FAR Manual for Steering Group review by January 22, 1996.

The foregoing response addresses the four specific requests outlined in your letter regarding status, responsibilities, interim milestones, and contemplated implementing actions. Other actions concerning dissemination and personnel training will be identified in the development process and discussed with the Board. Please direct any questions concerning this response to Orin Pearson (202-586-2407).

Sincerely,

Tara J. O'Toole, M.D., M.P.H.
Assistant Secretary
Environment, Safety and Health