



Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

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June 29, 1998

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DNF SAFETY BOARD

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:

The Department recently revised the Implementation Plan (IP) for Board Recommendation 93-3, Improving the Technical Capability in Defense Nuclear Facilities Programs. The IP commits the Department to charter a Federal Technical Capability Panel (Panel), comprised of Federal Technical Capability Agents, to oversee and resolve issues affecting the Federal Technical Capability Program (FTCP). The IP also commits the Department to conduct routine meetings of the Panel to ensure successful implementation of a corporate program to recruit, develop, deploy, and retain technical capability at defense nuclear facilities.

Enclosed is a copy of the Panel Charter that the Deputy Secretary signed on June 11, 1998. The Charter identifies the membership, logistics, and responsibilities of the Panel members, and the length of time for which they are to serve. The Panel conducted its first meeting on April 21, 1998, with 100% attendance. Establishment of a charter that defines the roles and responsibilities of the Panel, approved by the Deputy Secretary, and accomplishment of the first Panel meeting are deliverables pursuant to Commitment 5.2.1.1 of the IP.

The Department has completed the actions identified under this commitment, and proposes closure of this commitment.

If you have any questions please call me, or your staff may contact Mr. Dave Roth at (202) 426-1506.

Sincerely,

Thomas W. Evans
Executive Secretary to the
Federal Technical Capability Panel

Enclosure

FEDERAL TECHNICAL CAPABILITY PANEL CHARTER

Background

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) issued a letter to the Secretary of Energy (Secretary) on April 2, 1997, requesting that the Implementation Plan (IP) responding to Board Recommendation 93-3 be revised. The Secretary agreed with the request to revise the Implementation Plan in his response to the Chairman on April 25, 1997, and directed the formation of a working group of senior line managers to accomplish that goal.

The Department convened the "Recommendation 93-3 Implementation Plan Recast Working Group" in June 1997 with the charter of developing the content and structure of the revised IP. The group met several times during 1997 and early 1998, and developed the "Revised Implementation Plan for Improving DOE Technical Capability in Defense Nuclear Facilities Programs," which was approved by the Secretary on May 5, 1998, and accepted by the Board on June 1, 1998.

The revised IP enhances current Departmental initiatives to establish a Federal Technical Capability Program (FTCP) for federal employees with safety responsibilities at defense nuclear facilities. Recognizing that corporate leadership and line management ownership are essential to the successful implementation of a corporate program to recruit, develop, deploy, and retain technical capability at defense nuclear facilities, the IP commits the Department to charter a Federal Technical Capability Panel (Panel) to oversee and resolve issues affecting the FTCP.

Membership

The Manager/Assistant Secretary of the offices listed below shall designate a Senior Technical Safety Manager to serve as their agent on the Panel, with one exception. The Office of Human Resources and Administration may designate a senior manager who is not a Senior Technical Safety Manager to act as a representative on the Panel. To maintain consistency on the Panel, these agents shall serve for a minimum of a two year period. The Panel will continue indefinitely at the discretion of the Deputy Secretary.

- Albuquerque Operations Office
- Idaho Operations Office
- Nevada Operations Office
- Oak Ridge Operations Office
- Oakland Operations Office
- Ohio Field Office
- Richland Operations Office
- Rocky Flats Field Office
- Savannah River Operations Office
- Office of Defense Programs
- Office of Environment, Safety and Health
- Office of Environmental Management
- Office of Human Resources and Administration

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The Office of Environment, Safety and Health (EH) participates in all IP activities while maintaining its independence. EH will: 1) establish a panel within its own organization to oversee and resolve issues affecting the FTCP with regard to EH, 2) share information (e.g., documentation, reports) with the Panel affecting the FTCP with regard to EH, and 3) if necessary, in coordination with the Panel, seek resolution by the Deputy Secretary on any FTCP disagreements that arise and remain unresolved between the Panel and EH.

Additionally, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, Office of Field Management, and Office of the General Counsel will have senior representation at Panel meetings when requested by the Panel. The Panel will receive advice and support from the Office of the Deputy Secretary and other supporting organizations as appropriate.

Logistics

1. The Panel will report to the Deputy Secretary.
2. The Panel will select one of its members to serve as the Chair of the Panel. The Chair will serve for a minimum of one year and no longer than two years.
3. The Director of Training and Human Resource Development (HR-31) will serve as the Executive Secretary for the Panel.
4. The Panel will meet at least once a quarter, and more often as the need arises. The Panel may meet via telephone conferences and tele-video conferences. Typically the Panel will have two face-to-face meetings per year.
5. The Panel will submit an annual report to the Secretary of Energy, via the Deputy Secretary, that summarizes the status, issues, actions taken, and recommendations to address the preservation of the Department's critical technical capabilities.

Responsibilities

The Panel is responsible for:

1. Overseeing and resolving issues affecting the Department's FTCP.
2. Developing and maintaining a Federal Technical Capability Policy for the Department.
3. Overseeing the implementation of the Department's Senior Technical Safety Manager (STSM) Program.
4. Performing or overseeing periodic assessments of the effectiveness of the FTCP using internal and external experts.

5. Conducting periodic meetings with the Board and its staff to communicate issues and expectations regarding the execution of the FTCP.
6. Providing recommendations to senior Departmental officials regarding the improvement of DOE technical capability.
7. Soliciting information and feedback from personnel in their organizations regarding the improvement of technical capability of the Department's workforce.
8. Keeping personnel in their organizations informed of the progress/problems associated with execution of the FTCP, and seeking support from senior officials regarding successful implementation.
9. Ensuring commitments and milestones identified in the revised IP are met.

Approved: Elyse A. Moore Date: 6/11/98
Deputy Secretary of Energy