



John D. Wagoner, Manager  
Department of Energy, Richland Operations  
P.O. Box 550  
Richland, WA 99352

September 7, 1995

Dear Mr. Wagoner:

RE: JUNE 22, 1995, "EXERCISE OZ" EMERGENCY DRILL

## **BACKGROUND**

The Health, Safety and Waste Management Committee of the Hanford Advisory Board is very interested in and supportive of the Department of Energy's (DOE) plans for response to incidents that involve on and off site releases of radiation. The recent "Exercise Oz" emergency drill, involving a simulated accident releasing a plume of radioactivity from an unknown source at the 100K Basins provided a member of our Board with an opportunity to see DOE's plans put into action. The Hanford Advisory Board would like to commend the Richland Operations office for conducting an extensive drill of this nature and inviting us, FEMA and others to observe and comment on the exercise.

The Waste Management Committee has reviewed the exercise report prepared by the Washington State Department of Health (attachment 1) and the DOE "Preliminary Exercise Report" (attachment 2). HAB member Pam Brown was an observer for the exercise and she also interviewed the FEMA employee who observed the exercise for that agency. HAB member Gordon Rogers attended a meeting on August 31, of RL and contractor staff at which the major findings and actions were discussed prior to completion of the final report.

## **ANALYSIS**

It appears to us that in general we have learned from this exercise that everyone would benefit from improved communication in the event of a real emergency. There are different opinions about whether a tighter structure governing the flow of information would relieve or exacerbate this problem. We would like to outline several specific concerns that we believe should be addressed:

1. One of the HAB's major concerns is the safety of both workers and the public in the event of an actual release or radioactivity at the site. We view the failure to issue a timely Protective Action Recommendation (PAR) to the Grant County emergency management staff as the most serious problem during the exercise. Local governments have historically complained that the focus of DOE in dealing with releases of radioactivity is onsite with out adequate consideration for offsite effects.

It appeared the principal cause of the delay was the result of concentration by the Emergency Management Team (EMT) on efforts to clarify the actual source term rather than to give a prompt

recommendation to either shelter or evacuate the public in the path of the plume. The wind speed and direction dictate the time by which a PAR must be issued. In case of uncertainty as to the source term the PAR must be based on the worst case assumption.

2. It appeared that hierarchy of command prevented information from the field from being shared directly with you as the lead decision maker at the emergency operations center. Only when you requested all current information did people share what knowledge they had. Middle level people seemed to block the free flow of information.
3. It was observed that people with specific responsibilities in the command center did not routinely share information from the field with others in the EMT.
4. Communication between the different teams in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) must also be improved. The contractor group and others resorted to sending out scouts to listen to discussions in other rooms. Perhaps the scouting approach has merit but if it does it needs to be organized.

## CONCLUSION

We recognize and acknowledge years of growth and improvement in emergency planning efforts; but we believe that serious and legitimate concerns have been raised following the exercise that merit thorough consideration and responses. One of the objectives of an exercise drill is to identify opportunities for improved procedures. We are concerned that the preliminary exercise report makes light of problems that have been identified.

We would appreciate receiving a copy of your final internal evaluation of the drill and the Department's response to the concerns raised by the State of Washington. We look forward to working with you and your staff on these important issues.

Very truly yours,

Merilyn B. Reeves, Chair  
The Hanford Advisory Board

cc: Mary Riveland, Ecology  
Chuck Clarke, EPA  
Thomas Grumbly, Department of Energy  
Cindy Kelly, Designated Federal Official  
Linda Lingle, Site Representative  
The Oregon and Washington Congressional Delegations

enclosures

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*HAB Consensus Advice #30*

*Subject: June 22, 1995, "Exercise Oz" Emergency Drill (Health, Safety and Waste Management Committee)*

*Adopted: September 7, 1995*