



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

September 30, 2003

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JNF 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:

UPDATED LISTING OF DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL SERVING AS SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS FOR SAFETY SYSTEM OVERSIGHT

In March 2003, the Department committed to provide the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) with an updated status on the progress toward filling positions as subject matter experts (SME) at the 5 Offices where gaps remained. Since March, the Offices have made significant progress in addressing the remaining identified SME needs. Attachment 1 provides a summary of the actions taken and the compensatory measures that remain in effect. I will provide you with an update on the Department's efforts to fill remaining SME gaps at the briefing anticipated for December 2003 to respond to your June 12, 2003 reporting requirement on recommendation 2000-2 implementation plan issues.

The Department remains committed to safety system oversight. A revision to the Federal Technical Capability Panel (FTCP) Manual (DOE M 426.1-1) is now out for Department-wide review and addresses safety system oversight by defining safety system oversight responsibilities and competencies, and provides a basis for a more uniform implementation of safety system oversight throughout the Department. This agreed-upon approach for revising the Technical Qualification Program requirements refines the previously agreed-to approach presented in Commitment #19 of the Department's DNFSB Recommendation 2000-2 Implementation Plan. The revised Manual is expected to be approved in calendar year 2004.

The personnel requirements for safety system oversight are dynamic given the nature of work in the Department of Energy. Each Office is committed to having effective safety system oversight processes and the appropriate SMEs to implement them. The FTCP will continue to monitor critical staffing needs across DOE, including safety system oversight at all Offices.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (509) 376-6677.

Sincerely,

Roy J. Schepens, Chairman

Federal Technical Capability Panel



Schepens to Conway
September 30, 2003

cc:

K. McSlarrow, S-2

J. H. Roberson, EM-1

T. Przybylek, NA-2

M. B. Whitaker, DR-1

Enclosure

**Status of Safety System Oversight Gaps
September 2003**

Office	SSO Gaps Status as of March 2003	Status as of September 2003
Los Alamos Site Office (LASO)	LASO has a gap of 6.5 FTEs. LASO is conducting a detailed re-review of its safety system oversight needs and gaps, to be completed by June 2003. LASO plans to hire additional safety system oversight personnel (a maintenance engineer and an occupational safety engineer). LASO has initiated actions to fill these positions and expects to have vacancy announcements issued by June 2003.	<p>The Maintenance safety system oversight position (1.0 FTE) was filled through the hiring process.</p> <p>An Occupational Safety engineer (1.0 FTE) was hired and reports for duty mid-November.</p> <p>Due to re-review of the safety system oversight needs and implementation of the NNSA Service Center, the balance of resources (4.5 FTE) will be provided by the Service Center, as needed.</p>
Livermore Site Office (LSO)	LSO has a gap of 2.0 FTEs. LSO is identifying these 2 vacancies as part of its managed staffing plan in support of the NNSA re-organization. LSO has initiated actions to fill these positions and expects to have vacancy announcements issued by June 2003.	<p>The Mechanical safety system oversight position (1.0 FTE) was filled in June 2003 by assigning an individual with substantial experience in both electrical and mechanical engineering.</p> <p>After further analysis, and that LSO has only two electrical systems that are designated as vital safety systems, one of which is expected to be classified as non-nuclear within a year, LSO determined that the electrical position (1.0 FTE) was not needed. The electrical systems will be covered by the Mechanical safety system oversight position discussed above.</p>
Pantex Site Office (PXSO)	PXSO has a gap of 2.0 FTEs. PXSO plans to fill these positions. These positions are in the PXSO staffing plan, and position descriptions and qualification cards have been prepared. PXSO has initiated actions to fill these positions and expects to have vacancy announcements issued by June 2003.	<p>The Electrical/Instrumentation and Control (1.0 FTE) position was filled by assigning Mr. Scott Dolezal on August 10, 2003.</p> <p>The Fire Protection position (1.0 FTE) was re-advertised. An initial solicitation from within NNSA resulted in no applicants with the desired expertise. The position was re-advertised on September 2, 2003 (closes September 29, 2003) to all sources (nation-wide). The goal is to identify a qualified applicant with the desired expertise and make a selection by October 30, 2003. Mr. Dave Nester will continue to provide compensatory coverage until this selection is made.</p>
Sandia Site Office (SSO)	SSO has a gap of 1.98 FTEs. SSO has selected a mechanical engineer who is being developed, and plans to hire an electrical engineer. SSO has initiated actions to fill this position and expects to have a vacancy announcement issued by September 2003.	<p>The Mechanical safety system oversight position (0.86 FTE) was filled by assigning Mr. Michael Ortega (Sandia Federal staff).</p> <p>The Instrumentation and Control position (0.9 FTE) was advertised and final selection has been made.</p> <p>The Radiological Protection position (0.22 FTE) was filled by assigning Mr. David Steffes, returning from a detail assignment to Sandia.</p>
Richland Operations Office (RL)	RL has a gap of 1.0 FTE. RL has selected an individual to fill this gap and is awaiting approval and finalization of this hire.	To resolve the Fire Protection engineer (1.0 FTE) deficiency, RL hired 2 (2.0 FTE) mechanical engineers to become Fire Protection safety system oversight personnel. The individuals will complete a 2-year training program consisting of training courses and on-the-job training supervised by the existing Fire Protection engineer.