



The Secretary of Energy  
Washington, DC 20585

March 3, 1999

MEMORANDUM TO ALL DEPARTMENT AND CONTRACTOR EMPLOYEES

FROM:

BILL RICHARDSON

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Richardson".

SUBJECT:

Safety—Accountability and Performance

The Department of Energy (DOE) needs to strengthen its capabilities to protect the safety and health of people who work at and live near its facilities. While DOE's standards, technical competency, and operations are sound from a safety standpoint, the Department needs to improve how we oversee compliance with our requirements and, where deficiencies exist, ensure that managers are held accountable and that corrective actions are taken on a timely basis. A significant foundation has been laid over the past few years with the development of Integrated Safety Management (ISM) as the Department's corporate policy for environment, safety, and health. The ISM program now needs to go beyond its concepts and principles and establish the basic elements of meaningful oversight, enforcement, and accountability. We, therefore, will be adopting a number of safety enhancements over the next several months to address these needs.

Personal accountability for safety is key. This starts with workers and their unions and extends to contractor and Federal managers, Principal Secretarial Officers (PSOs), and ultimately to me. There must be open communication between management and employees and a zero tolerance policy for reprisals against those who raise safety concerns. Free and open expression of employee concerns is essential to safe and efficient accomplishment of the Department's missions. In order to achieve the goal of greater safety accountability, I will be taking a number of actions over the year. To begin, I am directing the following actions at this time.

- **Put ISM in place by September 2000.** I will expect all DOE sites to have verified that ISM systems are completely in place by September 2000. This should include integration of any other existing safety initiatives and programs (such as Voluntary Protection Program, WorkSmart Standards, Enhanced Work Planning, and International Standards Organization Programs). I expect line management to conduct periodic self assessments (DOE Policy 450.5, Line Environment, Safety and Health Oversight) of how it is meeting ISM implementation goals.



Additionally, I will look to the Office of Environment, Safety and Health (EH) to provide me with independent oversight of how line management is meeting its ISM commitments. Oversight findings, ratings, and trends will now be important in determining contractor and personnel performance reviews.

- **Accountability through Contracts.** The Department has completed a rulemaking that will help make certain that contractors fulfill the Department's ISM expectations and that excellence in safety performance is a matter of course. In March, the Department will publish revised DOE acquisition regulations in a final rule that, among other things, will hold a contractor's fee at risk in the event of poor safety performance. Coupled with contract reforms over the past year, ISM will be a central part of all of our contracts, from the request for proposal to the contract performance review.
- **Timely Resolution of Safety Deficiencies.** The EH Office of Oversight conducts independent evaluations of safety and emergency response and outlines its findings and deficiencies. The Department, however, lacks an effective system for demonstrating that identified deficiencies have been corrected. We will take the following steps to improve our overall performance in this area:
  - (1) The Office of Oversight will immediately develop protocols that define the process for planning, scheduling, and conducting oversight evaluations.
  - (2) Action plans to correct identified deficiencies will be developed by the responsible manager within 60 days of the issuance of future oversight reports. In addition, I am concerned about the status of action plans for previously-issued oversight reports. Therefore, I am directing all offices to submit status reports within 60 days of the issuance of this memorandum on the actions taken to correct deficiencies identified in EH evaluation reports issued over the past year. Status reports should be forwarded to the Assistant Secretary for Environment, Safety and Health.
  - (3) We will develop a system within 60 days to track, follow through, and close corrective actions across the complex. The system will initially include responses to Oversight evaluations, accident investigations, and emergency response reviews. The system will also identify Federal senior managers and PSOs responsible for correcting and closing pending safety deficiencies. I have asked the EH Office of Oversight to give me regular independent assessments of how the Department is meeting these goals.

To enhance this effort, I also am requesting that each DOE site establish a regular forum for discussing safety performance with contractor and labor representatives. These fora should identify safety problems and issues early and ensure that they are resolved in a timely manner.

- **Secretarial Safety Council.** I am establishing a Secretarial Safety Council to be chaired by the Deputy Secretary and to include senior DOE Headquarters and field managers. The Council will provide the Department with leadership and guidance to meet ISM targets. Over the next 90 days, the Safety Council will develop performance standards that will be used to hold Federal personnel accountable for effective and timely ISM implementation. The Council will also work to establish systems for holding contractors accountable for ISM implementation. Also, the Council will have responsibility to ensure the Department has a viable and effective employee concerns program.

The already-established Safety Management Implementation Team and Department Standards Committee will provide regular reports to the Safety Council and will continue carrying out specific Department-wide ISM initiatives. EH will work closely with both organizations and will continue as the Department's leading advocate for protection of workers, public, and environment through policy, guidance, and technical expertise.

The success of the Department's safety initiative and Price-Anderson Enforcement Program depends on effective coordination between DOE field offices and the EH Office of Enforcement. Where field offices have been active participants in these programs, we have seen demonstrated improvements in safety. It is now time to achieve this level of success across the complex. I expect field office managers, with the support of the PSOs and in coordination with EH, to take the necessary steps to ensure that safety issues are promptly identified and resolved. In turn, EH will improve its ability to effectively oversee and evaluate our safety performance by strengthening its professional technical staff.

I will be holding all of you accountable for safety and the continued support of ISM. If I can leave you with one word, it is **results**.