



**Department of Energy**  
Washington, DC 20585

December 15, 2003

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In my letter to you dated September 5, 2003, regarding the Department of Energy's (DOE) proposed revision to the *DOE Handbook: Electrical Safety* (DOE-HDBK-1092-98), we committed to take several actions to address your concerns regarding revisions to this Handbook. First, we committed to issue the current proposed Handbook (DOE-HDBK-1092-XXXX) as a DOE guidance document for the limited purpose of establishing the criteria of an electrical safety program as required by DOE O 440.1A, and a reference document for all appropriate electrical safety requirements, codes, and standards. Second, we committed to form a DOE Electrical Safety Group to develop a general framework for DOE electrical safety training programs and any additional requirements or guidance for unique DOE work environments. This general framework would be based on DOE-HDBK-1092-98.

The DOE Electrical Safety Group had several meetings to discuss the appropriate path forward to develop and issue DOE electrical safety guidance. While various needs exist for guidance, the main criterion is that the guidance must be used by and useful to all electrical workers who encounter electrical safety hazards in the workplace. The Electrical Safety Group decided that the best course of action is to develop one DOE guidance document that can be used as a reference tool by electrical workers who need to understand the hazards, existing codes and standards relating to the hazards, and the appropriate controls that need to be implemented. Issuing one DOE guidance document ensures that (a) electrical safety issues and concerns are addressed in a comprehensive manner, (b) current codes and standards are maintained and properly referenced, (c) consistency is maintained between the classroom and the workplace, and (d) there is no conflict or confusion between two or more guidance documents. Accordingly, the DOE Electrical Safety Group recommended that we eliminate DOE-HDBK-1092-XXXX, and proceed to devote all resources to revise, enhance, and reissue DOE-HDBK-1092-98.

My staff has discussed this path forward with your staff. They agree that revising and reissuing DOE-HDBK-1092-98, and then eliminating DOE-HDBK-1092-XXXX will enhance electrical safety and is a better use of resources. Additionally, the criteria for an electrical safety program, a main subject for DOE-HDBK-1092-XXXX, is contained in Appendix A to DOE-HDBK-1092-98 and will be retained. I am also in support of this

path forward because it is better to develop one guidance document or reference tool that can be used by practitioners in both the classroom and in the workplace.

The DOE Electrical Safety Group, whose members represent a cross section of the various DOE work environments, has made assignments to enhance and revise DOE-HDBK-1092-98 and has begun work. We will coordinate these activities with your staff to ensure that they are involved and their concerns and issues are addressed. The initial review of DOE-HDBK-1092-98 is still scheduled for February 2004, with a revised draft by April 2004.

Please contact me or Raymond Hardwick if you would like to discuss this matter. Richard Black will continue to work with your staff regarding our activities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beverly A. Cook".

Beverly A. Cook  
Assistant Secretary  
Environment, Safety and Health

cc:

M. Whitaker, DR-1

E. Beckner, NA-10

J. Roberson, EM-1