



Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

July 28, 2003

The Honorable John T. Conway
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, NW
Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20004-2901

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Department of Energy (DOE) Fire Safety Committee held its annual meeting on April 29, 2003. This meeting, sponsored by the Office of Environment, Safety and Health, was held in conjunction with the DOE/Contractor Fire Safety Workshop hosted this year by the Pantex site office. Enclosed are the minutes of that meeting.

Issuance of these meeting minutes completes the Action for Recommendation 5 of the DOE Commission on Fire Safety and Preparedness Final Report, May 28, 2002. As you may recall from our Action Plan responding to the Commission's Report, provided to you on January 3, 2003, we support the continued professional development of the safety staff, including training, professional conferences, and technical committee membership.

If you have any questions, please call me at 202-586-6151.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beverly A. Cook".

Beverly A. Cook
Assistant Secretary
Environment, Safety and Health

Enclosure

cc:

M. Whitaker, DR-1
R. Hardwick, EH-2
F. Russo, EH-3

Department of Energy Fire Safety Committee

Minutes of the April 29, 2003, Meeting

Written by: Jim Bisker, Chairman

The meeting was held at the Amarillo College Business & Industry Center (Amarillo, Texas) in conjunction with the Year 2003 DOE/Contractor Fire Safety Workshop (hosted by the Pantex site).

DOE Wildland Fire Management Guidance

The Department of Energy (DOE) Fire Safety Committee Chairman presented members with the recently developed Wildland Fire Management Guidance and asked for any review comments by June 1, 2003. The guidance describes DOE attributes of a documented wildland fire management plan using a graded approach based on a site's exposure to wildfires and/or land management planning objectives. It was pointed out that the purpose of this non-mandatory guidance is to coordinate DOE wildland fire management responsibilities with the other federal agencies under the 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy. This policy was endorsed by the Secretary of Energy on February 24, 2003, and is detailed in: "The Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy," dated January 2001.

DOE Order 420.1 Revisions

In a January 3, 2003, letter to the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Chairman, the Secretary of Energy committed to an Action Plan addressing some of the recommendations identified by the DOE Commission on Fire Safety and Preparedness. The Secretary assigned Ms. Beverly Cook, Assistant Secretary for Environment, Safety and Health (EH-1), responsibility for managing the completion of the actions contained in the Action Plan and to implement changes needed to address the remaining Fire Safety Commission's recommendations. Action Item 2.1 has a commitment to review DOE Order 420.1 and revise as appropriate by January 31, 2004. This commitment was discussed at the DOE Fire Safety Committee meeting, where it was suggested by the Committee Chairman that any Order revisions be developed by the committee and forwarded to EH-1.

In addition, revisions may also be needed for implementing guidance for DOE Order 420.1. The Committee Chairman will notify members on the revision schedule as soon as one is developed by EH-22. A discussion of potential revision topics took place with the following initial recommendations developed.

Code of Record (COR) Clause: Text needs to be revised to either highlight installation standards over administrative standards, or allow the most current installation standard with COR acceptability based on an item cost vs. safety benefit.

Local Building Code Clause: Text needs to be revised to identify the local statutory building regulations as taking precedence over any similar documents published by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). This revision is needed to address the newly published NFPA 5000, "Building Construction and Safety Code," as well as other NFPA documents that may be redundant to local regulations.

Baseline Needs Assessment Clause (BNA): Text should be revised to address the newly issued NFPA 1710 standard, "Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments." One such area discussed included the necessity for periodic review and update to the BNA based on the NFPA 1710, four-year revision cycle.

EH Fire Protection Website and the DOE Fire Protection Handbook

The Committee Chairman identified that on March 11, 2003, the DOE Fire Protection Handbook was cancelled from the DOE Standards revision process. However, the current Handbook contents are available on the Fire Protection website (<http://tis.eh.doe.gov/fire/>) and any revisions or updates to the Handbook could be best handled through future updates to the site. The committee members suggested that a sub-committee be formed to examine any recommend future web site updates. Members of this sub-committee include: Dennis Kubicki, William Shields, Craig Christenson, Bruce Campbell, and Jim Bisker.

Other Business

The Committee Chairman notified the committee members that a final review has been completed on Chapter 10 (Fire Protection) of the Nuclear Air Cleaning Handbook and that, based on this update, revisions may be needed for air cleaning topics covered in DOE Standard 1066, "Fire Protection Design Criteria."

The Committee Chairman also notified the committee members that a significant revision is being made to DOE Order 231.1, "Environment, Safety, and Health Reporting," that will affect loss rate statistics compiled through the Annual Fire Protection Summary. In short, the Order will no longer require collection of property losses (fire and non-fire) through the Computerized Accident/Incident Reporting System (CAIRS) system and because of this, CAIRS will no longer maintain DOE property valuations. Since CAIRS property valuations are used to compute Annual Fire Protection Summary Loss Rates, we will have to use some other mechanism to obtain property valuations. For the calendar year 2002 Annual Summary, property valuations will continue to be calculated through the CAIRS process. However, the 2003 Annual Summary will be based on Facility Information Management Systems (FIMS) data (and possibly back-fed to 1998, the earliest year that FIMS includes in its database). Because we will be using a different database for valuations, it can be expected that historical loss rate numbers will change.

For additional information on these minutes or the DOE Fire Safety Committee, please contact Jim Bisker on (301) 903-6542 or at e-mail address: jim.bisker@hq.doe.gov.