

NEW INITIATIVES IN THE OFFICE OF SAFETY, HEALTH AND SECURITY

Robert Goldsmith, Ph.D.
Deputy Director
Office of Safety, Health and Security
Office of Environmental Management
U.S. Department of Energy

One of the reasons the Office of Safety, Health and Security was established in November, 1999 was to consolidate EM's resources, expertise and experience in those areas, as well as in emergency management, packaging certification, quality assurance, analytical services and risk management. This combination has allowed the Office to support the corporate infrastructure of the Office of Environmental Management, and influence the entire cleanup process. Thus, we consider ourselves to be a "cleanup catalyst", affecting all programs and sites as we "Manage the Risk."

In the areas of safety and health, safeguards and security, emergency management and analytical services we are not a "mini" Office of Environment, Safety and Health (EH), as we have no independent oversight role in the sense of discovering and delineating insufficiencies. We function to find and solve problems. We monitor performance and assist the line and the field in improving performance. Some of the ways we do this include having dedicated site-specific liaisons and crosscutting technical subject matter experts in disciplines such as fire protection and radiological protection. For Safety and Emergency Management Evaluations, we assist in the development, approval and tracking of Corrective Action Plans. We also assist the sites in the development of Site Safeguards and Security Plans, which are the primary risk management and risk acceptance documents for EM managers. For Quality Assurance (QA), we have more of an oversight role, particularly for High Level Waste QA, whereas for Packaging Certification, we have a regulatory role in certifying safe packages for transport of hazardous materials for all DOE packages except nuclear weapons and components.

While the initial focus of the Office was on safety and beginning the institutionalization of Integrated Safety Management, a variety of new initiatives are in progress to tailor the Office's assistance to the unique requirements of EM mission programs and sites. During the past year we have seen indications that our enhanced focus on workplace safety is demonstrating measurable results. At several sites, the rates of reportable injuries have decreased markedly. Nonetheless, we believe that another, perhaps more accurate, measure of the effect of our intervention is determining whether worker safety culture has changed. Therefore, we have contracted with the National Safety Council to conduct a series of employee safety surveys at all EM sites. These surveys are designed to assess six safety program categories: management participation, supervisory participation, employee participation, safety support activities, safety support climate, and organizational climate. Next year we hope to be able to report on the results of these surveys at Waste Management 2002.

We will also focus on ensuring full implementation of DOE Policy 450.5 (Line Environment, Safety and Health Oversight). We intend to increase monitoring of field and contractor performance, including assuring that contractors' performance is reviewed against formally established measures and indicators. In the near future, we will sponsor a meeting of field and HQ elements to develop set of core elements (linked to performance measures and indicators, line and independent evaluations, compliance with applicable requirements, data collection, analysis, corrective actions, and continual feedback and improvement) to be assessed by field offices and reported to EM-5/HQ in accordance with P450.5.

At the same time, we will ensure continued implementation of the Integrated Safety Management System. We will do this by participating in ISM reviews/updates, monitoring available data from ORPS and CAIRS, assisting with the development of Corrective Action Plans and monitoring the actions status through closure, continue emphasis on management walkthroughs, and ensure that contracts reflect ISMS provisions.

The Analytical Services area will see a large expansion and reconfiguration. Previously, the National Analytical Management Program (NAMP) focused on the analytical chemistry infrastructure, i.e. laboratory accreditation, consolidated audits, standardized laboratory statements of work and radiological traceability. These programs are the foundation of the new, program, entitled 3D for Data, Decision, Documentation. This program is based on the principle that decision-making is reliant, not only on quality data, but also on sound information and effective knowledge management. The program will provide methods, and serve as the EM focal point for the systematic planning process which examines existing sources of data, identifies data gaps and determines the most effective means of acquiring additional data. Defensible decision making derives from the knowledge gained from the information derived from the data. Thus, the program will key on the needs of EM decision-makers in the Field and at Headquarters, and tailor the 3D process to those needs. If necessary, the policies and guidance which form the basis of the current analytical services program will be reviewed and modified.

EM-5 will initiate a program to conduct emergency management readiness assurance appraisals at EM sites. The Emergency Management Readiness Assurance Appraisal Program is being established to review and enhance emergency management compliance within EM. The program is intended to be a helpful tool for achieving and maintaining full compliance with regulatory requirements, while providing field access to operational methodologies (good practices) that enhance operation management practices. The appraisals will also be used as a method to provide independent verification/validation for emergency management corrective actions as identified in the Office of Independent Oversight and Performance Assurance (OA) reports. Appraisals will be coordinated with the field office's emergency management staff and may be conducted in concert with the field office or with the Office of Security and Emergency Operations (SO-40). The primary criteria to be used for the appraisals are the Performance Objectives found in the draft DOE Emergency Management Guide on Evaluation (DOE G 151.1-1, V6). EM-5 is in the process of scheduling two such appraisals for this fiscal year.

WM'01 Conference, February 25-March 1, 2001, Tucson, AZ

Other programs initiated in FY 2000 will continue. EM-5 will continue its role supporting the EM field offices and the HQ site teams in the area of emergency management. EM-5 will continue to conduct bi-monthly conference calls with the EM field offices to coordinate, share information and give guidance to the field on emergency management issues. EM-5 will continue to collect and evaluate emergency management metric data to help determine the status of emergency management, and will monitor progress made on emergency management corrective actions.

EM-5 is also renewing its commitment to develop and implement a EM Headquarters drill/exercise program. The focus of the drill/exercise program will be on supporting readiness and preparedness for EM HQ response to incidents; reinforcing the EM HQ Emergency Management Plan, procedures and HQ EMT EM position-specific checklists; and promoting effective HQ field interactions/communication during emergencies at EM facilities or involving EM activities. EM-5 is working with the Office of Security and Emergency Operations (SO-40) and the EM field offices to accomplish this.

The Packaging Certification Team sponsored a workshop last October to develop new initiatives to improve the review of applications for certification of Type B and fissile radioactive materials packages, among other topics. As a result, we intend to modify the review process with regard to how EM-5 reviewers interact with applicants. We will improve communication with applicants during the review process by making information such as scheduling, topical courses on welding issues, acceptance testing, and review status available on our website. We will be developing safety guides and regulatory guides, and will strive for more frequent direct interaction with applicants. Additionally, to assist applicants in preparing required documentation, we will be instituting an annual SARP preparation course.

The Office of Safety, Health and Security has organized and evolved quickly over its first year of existence. Now, in its maturation process, we will try to reach out to the Department's Program Offices and Field Sites to focus our efforts where they can best provide quality, consistency and technically sound assistance.