

Memorandum

DATE: December 17, 1998

REPLY TO

ATTN OF: FM-10(J. Hassenfeldt, 202 586-1643)

SUBJECT: Incentives for the Department's Facility Representative Program

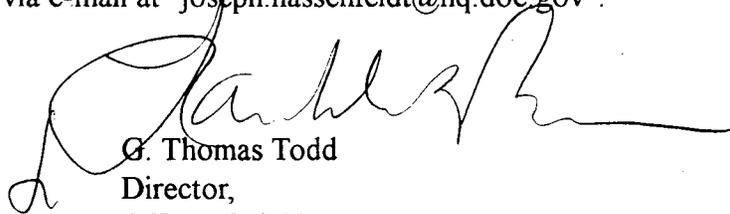
TO: Distribution

The Department's Revised Implementation Plan for Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendation 93-3 has once again underscored the Department's commitment to maintaining the technical capability necessary to safely manage and operate our defense nuclear facilities. Attracting and retaining highly qualified employees and placing them in our critical technical positions is vital to fulfilling this commitment.

You have identified 95% of your Facility Representative positions as critical technical positions. The Office of Field Management has noted a 12% annual attrition rate of Facility Representatives from the Facility Representative Program. Consequently, we have undertaken an effort to address the recruitment and retention concerns within the Facility Representative Program.

This memo serves to forward Department-wide incentives for the Facility Representative Program that have been recommended by a working group of Facility Representatives, managers, personnel specialists, and other representatives from your offices. I would like to thank you for the support your staff members have provided on this effort. After your review and comment, these proposals will be incorporated into a revision of the Department's Facility Representative Program Technical Standard (DOE-STD-1063-97). Attachment 1 states the proposals, and Attachment 2 lists the team roster for your information. These individuals will be valuable to you as you review the proposed incentives and work on their implementation.

I am sure that I can count on your support in reviewing these recommendations and implementing the necessary changes in your offices. Please forward your comments on these proposals to Joe Hassenfeldt, Facility Representative Program Manager, by January 8, 1999. Joe can be reached at 202 586-1643, or via e-mail at "joseph.hassenfeldt@hq.doe.gov".



G. Thomas Todd
Director,
Office of Field Management

Attachments

Distribution w/ Attachment

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Incentive Proposals for the Facility Representative Program

These items are proposed with the intention of improving the recruitment and retention of technically competent Facility Representatives (FacReps). The Department has asserted that the FacReps are critical technical resources (95% are listed as Critical Technical Positions with an additional 33 positions unfilled), but, to date, has not incorporated this assertion into actual incentives DOE-wide. This action is necessary due to the increasing difficulty in attracting new Facility Representatives and the 12% annual attrition of FacReps from the Facility Representative Program. There is also a 4% attrition of FacReps leaving the Department, Field Offices are beginning to deplete local technical talent, and the FacRep position is still seen as a low morale, 'dead end' job.

Implementation of these incentives will depend to a great extent on the comments to be made by the senior managers.

If approved, these proposals will be institutionalized by incorporating them into a revision to DOE-STD-1063-97, *Establishing and Maintaining a Facility Representative Program at DOE Facilities*.

Facility Representative Recognition

1. Real-time Acknowledgement

The DOE has instituted a Facility Representative of the Year Award which is given annually to the FacRep who has demonstrated the highest level of performance. Recognition of FacRep accomplishments can be improved by allowing real-time recognition of superior work. Noteworthy FacRep achievements can be submitted to the Office of Field Management, FM-10, who will post these achievements on the Internet on DOE's FacRep Bulletin Board.

2. Core Technical Group

Lessons-learned sharing can be improved by adding a Facility Representative grouping to DOE's Core Technical Group. This can facilitate contact between FacReps across the complex to discuss related aspects of their facilities.

Management Awareness

One frustration that FacReps face is a lack of direct interaction with the Line Managers of their assigned facilities. These are steps which can be taken to improve the relationship between the FacReps and the Line Organization.

3. Include Line Managers in Facility Representative Qualification Process

Include Line Managers in the final Oral Boards and Facility Walkthroughs for their Facility Representatives. This gives the Line a stronger appreciation for the technical rigor of the FacRep qualification process.

4. Incorporate Joint Walkthroughs

Incorporate joint Line/FacRep facility walkthroughs which demonstrate FacRep routine and help to keep the Line Managers directly engaged in FacRep issues.

5. Allow Limited Programmatic Work

There is concern that the current policy of forbidding FacReps from participating in programmatic/project work is unduly limiting the FacReps' ability to 1) effect positive changes at a higher level than they normally see, 2) be responsive to their managements' short-term resource demands, and 3) gain practical experience which might help achieve career goals regarding promotion into program or project positions. Allowing assignment of limited amounts of programmatic work to Facility Representatives can remedy this situation, without sacrificing the FacRep's independence.

6. Maximize Mentoring and Exchange Opportunities

Mentoring and exchange opportunities should be encouraged to the greatest extent possible. These activities will impact on short-term manpower, but provide the benefits of sharing good practices and information between facilities with similar missions, and allows expansion of the Facility Representatives' technical knowledge. This approach may also be beneficial with other technical personnel.

Staffing

7. Nation-wide Facility Representative Recruitment

Many locations are beginning to exhaust their local technical resources as Facility Representatives and subject matter experts are promoted, transferred, retired, or resign. The FacRep position is a Critical Technical Position for safety. Therefore, Field Element Managers should pursue blanket permission to advertise their FacRep positions nation-wide within the DOE and external to DOE, without having to justify a nation-wide search for each position. Any relevant Full Time Equivalent (FTE) limits would still apply.

8. Assign Facility Representative Grade Structure Based on "Risk"

When assigning FacReps to DOE facilities, DOE-STD-1063-97 requires the Field Element to analyze the facility's "risk" [hazards, activity level, mission importance, complexity, accident history, public interest, and other factors]. It is recommended that this analysis should also be used to determine the appropriate General Schedule (GS) grade level of the FacRep(s) to be assigned.

In some cases (very high 'risk' facilities) GS-15 FacReps may be warranted. Grade levels assigned to facilities should be objective, and not change based on short-term personnel availability. Grade levels should only change when the 'risk' of the facility changes. Once these grade levels are determined, every effort should be made to adhere to these levels when assigning FacReps to their facilities.

These guidelines would create a structure similar to that shown in Table 1. Current staffing may not reflect this assignment of grades, but this template should be used for future hiring actions in order to achieve proper grading and to offer growth incentive to Facility Representatives.

Table 1. Grade Structure vs Facility “Risk”

Grade	Position	Additional
GS-15	Lead/Supervisory role	Qualified FacRep Multiple High Risk Facilities - Qualified FacRep
	Highest Risk	
GS-14	High Risk	Multiple Moderate to High Risk Facilities - Qualified FacRep
GS-13	Moderate Risk	Multiple Low to Moderate Risk Facilities - Qualified FacRep
GS-12	Low Risk	Low Risk Facilities - Qualified FacRep Working toward Qualification
	In-Training	

This would be implemented following an assessment of facility “risk”. This assessment of a facility’s “risk” will be done by a team using the facility analyses held at the field offices.

In order to provide a ‘pipeline’ of candidates for the FacRep Program, Field Elements should provide the Facility Representative Core Qualification Card to high-potential GS-11/12/13’s and technical personnel, and to any site personnel who wish to further their technical knowledge of site facilities. This is not a guarantee of a future hire into the FacRep program, but it will raise the technical knowledge of the individuals and the office, and will provide a ready ‘pipeline’ of candidates who can apply for FacRep vacancies when they occur. This will also reduce the overall length of time required for new FacReps to qualify. This might also allow temporary job exchanges between FacReps and non-FacReps, which expands the Office’s base of personnel experienced in multiple disciplines.

9. Proper Grade Level for Facility Representative Supervisors and Team Leaders

A Facility Representative Supervisor or Leader is a person who is not a Line Manager, yet whose FacReps provide matrixed support to Line Managers. The Supervisor provides technical and administrative direction to FacReps, plans and schedules work, accepts or rejects completed work, assures accuracy requirements are met, appraises performance, approves leave, and must interface with Line Managers when FacRep safety issues conflict with Line Managers’ priorities. These functions are best filled by persons who have been Qualified FacReps.

It is important to assign proper grade levels to these supervisors so that they can adequately interface with Line Managers. Incumbent FacRep Supervisors who are at the GS-14 level have difficulty trying to stand ‘toe-to-toe’ with Line Managers and Senior Management (who are GS-15s or members of the Senior Executive Service) when disputes arise regarding safety significance of FacRep issues.

Assign appropriate grade levels to FacRep Team Leader, Lead FacRep, Senior FacRep, and FacRep Supervisor positions. Guidelines for proper grading can be found in the Office of Personnel Management's 'General Schedule Leader Grade Evaluation Guide'. In general, the guidelines recommend assigning a grade level one higher than the personnel led or supervised.

10. Facility Representative Promotion

DOE values the knowledge and experience gained through participation in DOE's Technical Qualification Program. In order to demonstrate that technical competence is indeed valued, Vacancy Announcements for senior positions should reflect this fact in their 'ranking factors'. One possible solution is to include statements reflecting that "...the preferred candidate will have a depth and breadth of knowledge and experience in the operations of the relevant facilities. Successful completion of Facility Representative Qualification is an example of the level of technical knowledge desired...".

This action, more than any of the others recommended here, will do the most to provide incentive to become a FacRep.

Financial

The FacRep often works during off-hours, performing 'duty officer' functions, is subject to adverse conditions, and is largely non-sedentary - especially when compared to positions of the same grade level. Financially, managers are encouraged to offer Quality Step Increases, Retention Bonuses, or one-time cash awards to incentivize their FacRep positions and offset this disparity. The "Manager's Guide to Administrative Flexibilities" outlines the financial incentives available to managers for use in recruiting and retaining their personnel. The DOE is not allowed to implement these incentives on a national basis (because of the concern for equity to non-FacRep employees), but Field Elements have them at their disposal.

11. Pay Banding

The issue of financial benefit for FacReps may be addressed successfully by implementing a Pilot project for FacRep pay banding. The basic premise is a Pilot effort to establish pay bands which would track with the FacRep through the stages of training, qualification, proficiency, re-qualification, and take into account the 'risk' of the assigned facilities to determine which pay band is appropriate. FacReps would remain members of the competitive service, and would not be excluded from eligibility for any GS positions which open. This issue will be researched further and dealt with independent of the revision to DOE-STD-1063-97.

Facility Representative Incentives Working Group

Membership list:

Tom Todd	FM-1	FRIWG Champion
Charlie Hansen	RL	Action Officer under 93-3 re-write
Joe Hassenfeldt	FM-10	FacRep Program Mgr, Team Leader
Carol Peabody	EM-4	Program HQ
Dan Wilken	OR	AM for Administration
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Ken Zamora	LAAO	FacRep supervisor
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Rick Dion	RFFO	FacRep
William Bell	LAAO	FacRep
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Carl Everatt	SR	former FacRep
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