

memorandum

DATE: APR 21 1998

REPLY TO

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

SUBJECT: Guidance on Retention of Facility Representative Technical Competence during Reductions in Force

TO: Distribution

The Department's Revised Implementation Plan (IP) for Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendation 93-3 renews the Department's commitment to maintaining the technical capability necessary to safely manage and operate defense nuclear facilities. Retaining highly qualified employees in critical technical skills areas is vital to the maintenance of these technical capabilities. The Department has therefore committed in the revised IP to the development of a model that offices can use to proactively manage and preserve critical technical capabilities.

During the worst case Fiscal Year 1998 Budget scenario, the Department had to quickly prepare for a widespread reduction in force for the first time in over 15 years. Position descriptions, qualification requirements, and competitive level determinations had to be reviewed and documented in a very short period of time. The Department became concerned about the vulnerability of unique critical technical positions under these circumstances. Of particular concern, were DOE's Facility Representative positions. These positions' operational safety role in their assigned facilities is recognized as unique within the Department. Fortunately, the Department was able to cancel the majority of reduction in force actions resulting from the FY 1998 Budget proposals, but the need to review and improve documentation required for any future reductions in force remained.

This memorandum and its attachments focus on the Facility Representative position in order to address the type of documentation necessary to support competitive level determinations and to document special qualification requirements beyond those published by the Office of Personnel Management where applicable. This same process may be applied to other positions, especially other critical technical positions, where duties and qualification requirements are unique. This model is provided as guidance to be used, as necessary, by individual field offices to supplement existing procedures.

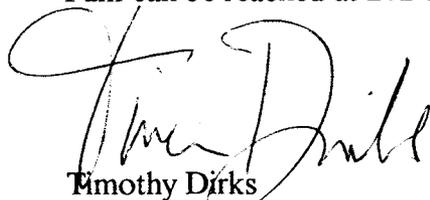
In reviewing the Facility Representative qualifications program, it was determined that a level of knowledge and experience needed to be identified for development of this model. The portions of the qualification process common for all Facility Representatives which must be completed before a candidate can be considered a "Designated Facility Representative" are listed in Attachment 1.

In the reduction in force process, the agency must establish competitive levels based on regulations found in Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations Part 351.403 which defines a competitive level as:

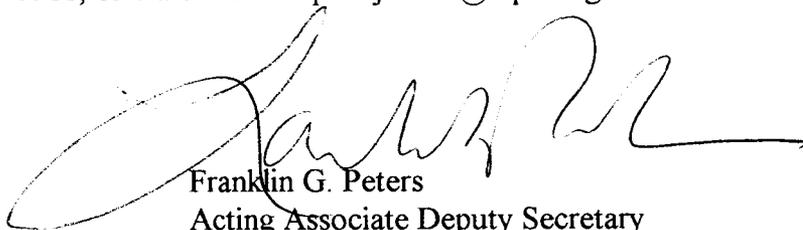
"...all positions in a competitive area which are in the same grade (or occupational level) and classification series, and which are similar enough in duties, qualification requirements, pay schedules, and working conditions so that an agency may reassign the incumbent of one position to any of the other positions in the level without undue interruption."

In order that competitive levels can be properly established, position descriptions must document the duties and functions performed as well as the knowledge required to fully perform the duties of the position, especially where qualifications should be expanded through the use of selective placement factors. The Facility Representative Personnel Guide issued in 1993 provided sample position descriptions as well as information about the possibility of establishing selective placement factors. This memorandum provides sample language that can be used as an amendment to those position descriptions and any vacancy announcements issued to fill the positions describing the knowledge, skills, and abilities required (selective placement factors) for entry into the Designated Facility Representative Position. The selective factors along with the unique nature of the duties and functions of the position distinguish the Designated Facility Representative Positions as unique for competitive level purposes and for qualification determinations during the RIF process. (See Attachment 2.)

Questions regarding this model should be sent to Joe Hassenfeldt, Facility Representative Program Manager, FM-10, or to Pam Jeckell, Assistant Director for Workforce Reinvention, HR-32. Joe can be reached at 202 586-1643, or via e-mail at "joseph.hassenfeldt@hq.doe.gov". Pam can be reached at 202 586-8511, or via e-mail at "pam.jeckell@hq.doe.gov".



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Attachments

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Servicing Personnel Offices

Attachment 1

Formal Designation as a Department of Energy (DOE) Facility Representative (FacRep)

The training and qualification process required of Department of Energy Facility Representatives varies somewhat throughout the DOE complex. The portions of the qualification process common for all Facility Representatives which must be completed before a candidate can be considered a "Designated Facility Representative" are:

- 1.) The General Technical Base Qualification Standard¹, and
- 2.) The Facility Representative Functional Area Qualification Standard¹, and
- 3.) At least six (6) months experience assigned to a Facility Representative position under the tutelage of a FacRep supervisor, FacRep mentor, or senior FacRep at DOE facilities.

When these three conditions are met, the Field Element Manager may award Designation to the candidate. The Facility Representative Program Manager, in the Office of Field Management, FM-10, should be notified of all Designations for DOE-wide recording purposes. The Field Element Training Organization and Personnel Organization should also be notified to record the training achievement and to assign employees to Designated Facility Representative position descriptions with the established unique competitive level codes.

It is important to note that Designation is not equivalent to "Qualification" as defined in DOE-STD-1063-97, "Establishing and Maintaining a Facility Representative Program at DOE Facilities." Facility Representative Designation will occur BEFORE a Facility Representative achieves full Qualification². Qualification occurs in accordance with each Field Element's Facility Representative Program plan, and will include completion of FacRep Qualification Cards, facility-specific knowledge requirements, examinations, and oral boards.

Note 1. Qualification Standards are to be completed as specified in DOE O 360.1, Training.

Note 2. Individuals previously Qualified as Facility Representatives under DOE-STD-1063 who have met Designation requirements are eligible for Designation by the Field Element Manager. All notifications must be made.

Attachment 2

The Facility Representative Personnel Guide issued in 1993 included sample position descriptions for use in filling Facility Representative positions. The following selective placement factors are samples of factors which may be augmented or tailored to Designated Facility Representative positions at any site. Appropriate selective placement factors must be incorporated into the knowledge required by the position and used to determine basic qualifications for job entry. In addition, the inclusion of these selective placement factors along with the unique nature of the duties and functions of the position support the establishment of unique competitive level codes.

Selective placement factors, when incorporated into the knowledge required for job accomplishment and when supported by the duties and responsibilities of the position, extend the qualification requirements for initial entry into the position as well as entry into the position during reduction in force.

In order to fully perform the functions of this position, the incumbent must demonstrate:

- Knowledge of the advanced concepts, theories, principles, and practices of engineering or related physical science fields sufficient for independent technical evaluations of all aspects of nuclear and/or non-nuclear facility design, construction, maintenance and operation activities for facilities associated with Department of Energy activities.
- Knowledge of safety analysis principles and techniques sufficient to describe the basis, function, and operational characteristics of safety systems in the event that emergencies preclude immediate access to relevant plans and specifications.
- Knowledge of laws and regulations relating to occupational safety and health, environmental compliance, nuclear safety, and industry standards applicable to conduct of operations/maintenance at assigned facilities.
- Ability to operate independently at assigned facilities, serving as DOE technical expert regarding operational safety, day-to-day operational oversight, problem identification, analysis, and problem solving.

Completion of the requirements for "Designated Facility Representative" could be evidence of meeting the above selective placement factors.