

## **Secretary's Remarks at ISM Best Practices Workshop**

### Introduction

I am very pleased to have this opportunity to address you today. I want to thank Chuan Wu (pronounced "Chin Woo"), the Department's ISM Champion, and the Office of Environmental Management for sponsoring this workshop.

As I have stated since becoming Secretary of Energy, the health, safety and security of every member of this Department is my number one priority. We will not operate our facilities and we cannot achieve our missions unless we conduct our operations safely. I consider your safety to be my personal responsibility. Every one of our workers should be confident that they will return home safely after a hard day's work, and together, we can make that happen for every worker every day.

In my remarks today, I am going to say a few words about Integrated Safety Management and the new ISM Manual that is about to be issued. I also want to share my views on seven key safety leadership behaviors that I want you to adopt. Finally, I am going to touch on a significant change to our DOE safety organization that I directed be implemented, why we are making this change, and what it means to you.

### Integrated Safety Management

Integrated Safety Management (ISM) is the Department's framework for consistently and effectively integrating safety and quality into work planning, work performance, and continuous improvement. The Department developed ISM in 1996 as a process for us to do work safely and we now have 10 years of experience in implementing it. We have achieved substantial acceptance for ISM throughout the DOE community. At some sites, implementation has been excellent; at others, it has been inconsistent. We are in the midst of revitalizing our ISM implementation by re-focusing the attention of managers and workers on their ISM systems, to achieve thorough and effective implementation, and moving forward to build a robust and enduring culture of safe work performance at the Department of Energy.

This workshop is an important part of that effort and your attendance shows the importance that we collectively place on having vital and effective safety management systems. By focusing on sharing of best practices in safety management, this workshop provides an excellent opportunity to learn from each other. We have a wealth of experience and expertise within the DOE community. Our challenge is to recognize, communicate and instill the best practices from within our own community to achieve our objective of performance excellence.

I want to stop here to thank all of our ISM Champions, in both DOE and contractor organizations – Thank you for your efforts and your leadership in preventing accidents and events, in learning and applying the lessons that need to be learned, and making our work activities safe. The DOE ISM Champions Council, made up of designated champions from Headquarters and field offices, is charged with leading Department efforts to reinvigorate ISM implementation throughout the complex. The primary functions of the Champions Council are to facilitate communications, promote continued learning, sponsor periodic workshops, and assist the DOE senior management in monitoring and improving our safety management practices. The ISM Champions Council has had a very productive year so far and I look forward to more accomplishments in the future. I expect everyone to fully support this important Council. If you have feedback on how we can improve safety, please give your feedback to the DOE ISM Champion for your organization and they will get it to me.

We are close to issuing the new DOE Manual on Integrated Safety Management. This Manual is a positive step in helping us to strengthen our ISM systems. It clearly articulates the ongoing responsibilities and requirements for federal organizations in doing their part in ISM implementation; and it clarifies ongoing requirements for DOE contractors for maintaining effective implementation and learning from experience.

As we move forward with these improvements in ISM implementation, I want to make it clear that this is NOT a one-time exercise; our goal is to establish and institutionalize a framework that will allow us to continue to improve our safety performance over the upcoming years. I want you to probe hard into how you are doing business and make sure your systems and processes are effectively implementing the ISM principles and functions in your offices and at your facilities. I expect the top managers of our organizations to be engaged in these efforts. Effective revitalization will likely require sustained effort over several years. Throughout this period, we must ensure that our actions are aligned with our vision and our plans throughout all organizations. We must not only talk the talk, we must also walk the walk. We need your help to align our organizations with the right focus and commitment, using the right behaviors, to achieve our shared missions.

### Key Safety Leadership Behaviors

Leadership is essential to achieving lasting change. Effective leaders at all levels of the Department community are needed to build and sustain a robust safety culture that will be a positive influence on safe work performance – for many years to come, regardless of who is the top leader in your organization. I am going to share with you seven key leadership behaviors that we need to embrace and demonstrate to achieve the safety culture that we want.

1. Accept your safety responsibilities, make your safety expectations clear, and hold people accountable in a just manner.

“Walking the walk” means that every member of our organization understands and accepts his or her safety responsibilities. Once you have thoroughly identified and fully accepted your safety responsibilities, you will need to make sure that your systems and processes are effective for implementing the ISM framework. Where others support you in meeting safety responsibilities, you need to make your safety expectations clear to them and make sure they understand their responsibility to exercise good judgment and do work safely. I know that people want to do a good job and will do a good job when their expectations are clear and they have the resources they need. Where common practice is not acceptable, leaders need to identify unacceptable practices, understand the conditions that led them to become common practices, and change these conditions through constructive means, including changes to processes and procedures, training and coaching, and identifying and removing error-likely conditions.

2. Get employees involved in safety improvement.

“Walking the walk” means that our leaders will recognize the most effective way to leverage their efforts to improve safety: get everyone involved. The best suggestions on how to improve safety often come from those closest to the work. They understand best what is involved in the work, and they want to perform their work safely and reliably. Effective leaders unleash this potential by getting workers at all levels involved in improving safety and performance.

3. Get in to your facilities.

“Walking the walk” means that our leaders regularly spend time in their facilities observing work and providing real-time engagement, coaching, and feedback through empowerment, not micromanagement.

Missions are accomplished in the field. Safety happens in the field. Leaders make their presence felt in the field where work is being done, and follow the processes and methods, and demonstrate the values articulated in their ISM system descriptions, consistently and visibly.

**4. Encourage reporting.**

“Walking the walk” means that our leaders encourage reporting of errors and near-misses. Events below the formal reporting thresholds should be reported in local systems. We can only improve when we know where the problems are. If we punish errors and reporting, we will drive reporting underground and we will not be able to learn from our experiences. Excellent organizations not only encourage reporting, but reward it. We want reports of near-misses so that we can identify and address potential weaknesses in our layers of defenses that we have built to prevent significant occurrences. Our goal is to have no accidents. Vigorously encourage open and honest reporting so that we can continue to identify and improve upon our weaknesses.

**5. Encourage questioning attitudes and differing professional opinions.**

“Walking the walk” means that our leaders maintain a healthy skepticism regarding potential hazards and the adequacy of controls. They respect the questions and opinions of others. They seek to understand why actions are safe before they proceed. We must not become complacent based on past successes.

**6. Search for and eliminate error-likely situations.**

“Walking the walk” means that our leaders focus on work systems and processes to identify and remove error-likely conditions. Our leaders have attended Human Performance Improvement (HPI) training and learned that human errors are most often caused by organizational weaknesses and error traps, not by inattention or poor training. Our leaders seek to apply this knowledge in projects with the aim of improving safety and reliability. They learn from each other and share their experiences at workshops like this one.

**7. Learn from internal and external operating experiences.**

“Walking the walk” means that our leaders are constantly learning how to improve. Two essential sources of feedback for improvement are (1) internal operating experiences, both at your immediate site and at other sites and facilities within the DOE complex, and (2) relevant external operating experiences, from outside of DOE. For example, we continue to experience far too many electrical safety incidents, and we have recently experienced a number of serious injuries from seemingly routine activities such as riding work bicycles, walking down stairs, and stepping out of vehicles. We need to do better. We must make our feedback systems function more effectively so that we actually improve our operations as we move forward, and do not have to relearn old lessons.

I am confident that, together, we can walk the walk, and I look forward to continued progress and improvement in our safety performance.

### Creation of the Office of Health Safety and Security

To further emphasize the importance I have placed on worker health and safety, I recently approved a significant change to the DOE organization – the creation of the new Office of Health, Safety and Security. The creation of this office provides an integrated approach for policy, technical assistance, enforcement, and oversight that will enable us to more effectively manage the critical functions of health, safety, and security across the Department. This new office will be led by Glenn S. Podonsky, whom I have designated as the Chief Health, Safety and Security Officer for the Department. Many of you, I'm sure, know Glenn in his previous role as Director of the Office of Security and Safety Performance Assurance. All health and safety functions currently managed by the Office of Environment, Safety and Health (EH) will continue in an integrated manner within the new office to enhance the protections provided to our workers and the public. Additionally, all safety and security functions currently managed by the Office of Security and Safety Performance Assurance (SSA) will continue to enhance the security of the national assets entrusted to the Department. The Department will gain the added benefit of an integrated management approach for safety and security, where both disciplines will benefit from an increase in coordination and cooperation. Certain responsibilities outside of the core missions of health, safety and security that were performed by EH and SSA have been transferred to more appropriate program offices where those functions will continue and enable the new office to better focus on their primary mission of policy, assistance, oversight and enforcement.

To provide you with a more complete understanding of our reasons and objectives in creating this new office, I have asked our Chief Health, Safety and Security Officer to address you in person. I have confidence in Glenn's capable leadership and ask that you work with him and his team as they implement this desired vision.

### Closing

In closing, I want to thank you for your efforts in working to improve the Department's safety management systems and processes. I encourage you to forge a partnership with this new Office and its leadership team as they work in partnership with you to ensure that each DOE and contractor employee is able to return home safe and sound every day after a hard day's work.

**Secretary Bodman's video presentation at the ISM Workshop, September 2006 - [http://www.doeism.org/workshop/Sep-06\\_Presentations/Remarks.asp](http://www.doeism.org/workshop/Sep-06_Presentations/Remarks.asp)**