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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY HEADQUARTERS RECORDS

INACTIVE FILES

OFFICE OF HEALTH PHYSICS AND INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE

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INTRODUCTION:

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OFFICE OF HEALTH PHYSICS AND INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE

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The Department of Energy and Its Heritage: The Department of Energy (DOE) is one of the most diverse agencies in the Federal government. It was created in 1977 from a score of organizational entities from a dozen departments and agencies. DOE encourages the development of energy technologies in several areas--solar, geothermal, fossil fuel, and nuclear. It develops technologies aimed at promoting conservation of energy resources. DOE is one of the largest Federal agency supporters of basic scientific research and manages a research complex that includes some of the nation's premier laboratories. DOE helps formulate national policies for energy use and development. Perhaps surprisingly to many, DOE also runs the nuclear weapons research, development, and production complex as well as associated dismantlement and clean up activities.

DOE's nuclear heritage comes from the World War II Manhattan Project which built the atomic bomb. The threads of DOE's involvement with nuclear issues and programs run through the following agencies: the Manhattan Engineer District (1942-1947), the Atomic Energy Commission (1947-1975), and the Energy Research and Development Administration (1975-1977). Its involvement in energy policy formulation and promotion of energy conservation can be traced to the Federal Energy Administration (1973-1977). DOE took over functions, cultures, and traditions from these agencies and faced the task of melding them into a unified organization.

Of these agencies the Atomic Energy Commission devoted the most time and attention to the environmental impacts of nuclear technology and to radiation protection. From its inception in 1947 until its abolition in 1975, the AEC carried out a Congressional mandate for a large federal role in atomic energy development. The AEC maintained programs for nuclear weapons

research, development, production, and testing; production of plutonium and weapons grade uranium; milling and refining of uranium ore; biomedical research into the effects of radiation and nuclear weapons; basic nuclear research in fields such as chemistry, physics, and metallurgy; development of nuclear reactors; promotion of a civilian nuclear power industry; and conduct of international Atoms-for-Peace activities. It was unique among federal agencies in combining responsibilities to both promote and regulate a technology. Save for those programs devoted to regulating nuclear technologies, DOE eventually inherited all these programs.

The Department of Energy and the Environment: DOE's nuclear heritage included programs to understand and cope with the environmental impacts of nuclear technology. In the legislation establishing DOE, Congress assigned responsibility for these programs to an Assistant Secretary for the Environment. The assistant secretary was responsible for assuring that all Departmental programs were consistent with environmental and safety laws, regulations, and policies. He was also to assure DOE compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and other environmental protection laws, review and approve all agency environmental impact statements, monitor agency programs with respect to the health and safety of workers and the general public, and to conduct environmental and health-related research and development programs.

By the late 1980s official and public concerns about safety and environmental problems at DOE's aging nuclear weapons production complex had reached significant levels. Worries about the safety of production reactors were fueled by the Chernobyl accident in the Soviet Union. There was also widespread recognition of a legacy of environmental abuse within the weapons production complex and of the need to bring it into compliance with environmental laws. In 1989 DOE announced a ten point plan to bring its facilities into full compliance with environment, health, and safety laws. The Assistant Secretary for the Environment, now titled the Assistant Secretary for Environment, Health and Safety, received new authority, additional resources, and an enlarged organization to improve DOE's environmental and safety legacy. A primary means of changing institutional culture in this area was the use of large independent multidisciplinary teams, called Tiger Teams, to conduct independent assessments of environmental and safety compliance at Departmental facilities. Another was the creation of Office of Health Physics and Industrial Hygiene. Its inactive files are valuable because they document Department activities in the important area of radiation protection.

Inactive Office of Health Physics and Industrial Hygiene Files: These files have been grouped into four collections. They are described on the attached inventories. Each collection is comprised of subject files and each covers a slightly different time period and range of subjects as noted below. None of these files contain classified documents.

1. Radiation Protection Program Files, 1947-1990 (DOE Job Number 93038G). The collection is comprised primarily of general subject files on radiation protection. It also contains material on the exposure of Marshallese Islanders to fallout from a 1954 nuclear weapons test, on protection of workers at the Rocky Flats and other Departmental facilities, and on estimates of the exposures of workers and the local populace to radiation from production operations at Hanford.

2. Radiation Protection Files, 1971-1988 (DOE Job Number 93007G). The collection contains material on radiation protection appraisals, interagency reports, and correspondence with other Federal agencies on the subject.
3. Radiation Protection Program Files, 1988-1994 (DOE Job Number 95054G). The collection is primarily composed of subject files on the development of a Radiation Control Manual. It also contains files on International Atomic Energy Agency meetings, including one on the Chernobyl accident.
4. Radiation Protection Program Files, 1988 (DOE Job Number 93039G). The collection documents the development on a DOE regulation on radiation protection for occupational workers.

Arranging for Access to inactive Office of Health Physics and Industrial Hygiene Files:
Access to these files may be arranged by contacting David Anderson on 301-903-4231.

For Further Information: Additional information on DOE health and safety activities can be found in J. Newell Stannard, *Radioactivity and Health: A History* (Springfield, VA: National Technical Information Service, 1988) and in Terrence R. Fehner and Jack M. Holl, *Department of Energy, 1977-1994: A Summary History* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Energy, 1994). Copies of Tiger Team reports can be obtained from the National Technical Information Service in Springfield, VA.