



Department of Energy  
Office of Science  
Washington, DC 20585

March 18, 2013

MEMORANDUM TO: SC-3 FEDERAL STAFF

FROM:

JOSEPH MCBREARTY  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR FIELD OPERATIONS, (SC-3)

SUBJECT:

Proper Federal Oversight

Colleagues,

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you my expectations for the SC-3 work force as it relates to Federal oversight and involvement with our contractors.

As I am sure most of you are aware the Department of Energy has been and is continuing to be scrutinized concerning its Federal oversight of our contractors. There may have been misunderstandings over how the Contractor Assurance System fits into this model and what we are expecting our Federal staff to do in oversight of contractor activity. We are responsible for what I would call a *trust but verify approach* to Contractor Assurance. We have an *independent oversight* responsibility and must not simply rely on contractor self assessments to gauge their performance. As I have discussed on numerous occasions with the Site Office and Integrated Support Center managers, I expect SC-3 Federal employees to be in the field and on the deck plates to the maximum extent practical in alignment with their stated duties and responsibilities.

We have a long tradition of telling our contractors *what* to do and allowing them to determine *how* to perform that mission. However, we as Federal employees must ensure that the contractors perform their mission **safely, securely** and **efficiently**. I expect the Federal work force to be competent and to be able to understand the work that is in progress and know when to step in. We are the eyes and ears of the American public in this area. This is not an “*eyes on, hands off*” approach; all of us have the responsibility to ensure that our contractors operate within the terms and conditions of their contracts. We have seen, both inside and outside of Science, with the security breach at Y-12 being the most recent example, ineffective Federal oversight. While we may be tempted to point fingers or tell ourselves that this sort of thing can’t happen to us, we have found examples where we in the Office of Science have not performed effective oversight.

Our standards must remain high. Our SC-3 work force has over 600 highly talented and dedicated professionals. I am proud to serve with each and every one of you and I want to ensure that each of you hear directly from me on these expectations. I will not get into a list of specific actions since that would dilute the purpose of this memo. However, I want each of us to understand that we are operating some of this nation’s most precious resources and we have a personal responsibility directly to the American public for the safe and effective operation of our laboratories and facilities.

