

Safety Culture Improvement Panel

Outstanding Safety Culture Awards Program Guidance



Department of Energy



INTRODUCTION

The Department of Energy (DOE) has numerous programs for recognizing employees who consistently surpass and demonstrate high standards of excellence. The Outstanding Safety Culture Awards Program recognizes individuals and teams who exemplify the Safety Culture Focus Areas as defined by Attachment 10 of DOE G 450.4-1C, *Integrated Safety Management System Guide*, while performing their assigned duties that support the missions of the Department. These awards promote the Department's long-standing tradition of recognizing DOE and contractor employees who go above and beyond the call of duty while offering senior leaders and peers opportunity to acknowledge significant individual or team accomplishments that have strengthened safety culture in the Department.

The Outstanding Safety Culture Awards Program are administered through the Department's Safety Culture Improvement Panel (SCIP) with award program support and management provided by the SCIP Executive Secretary.

The Outstanding Safety Culture Awards Program is comprised of three categories:

1. Outstanding Safety Culture Award - Federal Employee
2. Outstanding Safety Culture Award - Contractor Employee
3. Outstanding Safety Culture Team Award

The Outstanding Safety Culture Awards Program recognizes Department of Energy Federal and contractor employees with a non-monetary award acknowledging superior application of safety culture focus areas and attributes. The Department will schedule the annual recognition ceremony during the SCIP Annual Meeting to acknowledge those individuals and/or teams selected for awards in each of the above three categories. In each category, an award will only be presented if complete nominations for that award are received.

Each Under Secretary, Power Marketing Administration, Headquarters Element, and Site/Field Element is encouraged to take full advantage of this program. Use this guidance as a reference for the Safety Culture Awards Program procedures and nomination process.

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I. GUIDE OVERVIEW

This guidance defines the process for the Department of Energy (DOE) Outstanding Safety Culture Awards Program and its nomination process. This special award is established in accordance with the requirements of DOE Order 331.1D, *Employee Performance Management and Recognition Program*, as an honorary award.

II. PURPOSE

The Outstanding Safety Culture Awards Program is intended to recognize an individual or team for their superior or model actions over a period of one fiscal year that exemplify the Safety Culture Focus Areas as defined by Attachment 10 of DOE G 450.4-1C, *Integrated Safety Management System Guide*. These awards epitomize the dedication and commitment necessary to shift focus from mere compliance towards excellence while emphasizing continuous improvement and long-term performance.

The Outstanding Safety Culture Awards Program has three categories:

1. Outstanding Safety Culture Award - Federal Employee
2. Outstanding Safety Culture Award - Contractor Employee
3. Outstanding Safety Culture Team Award

Award nominations are approved through each Site/Field Office Manager and/or Headquarters Element Approving Official.

III. ELIGIBILITY

The Department created the Outstanding Safety Culture Awards Program to recognize DOE Federal and contractor employees for their outstanding accomplishments and contributions to the safety culture of the agency. Supervisors or peers should nominate individuals whose performance and contributions to the enhancement of DOE's safety culture is exceptional. Award nominees should be individuals who strive for excellence while emphasizing continuous improvement and long-term performance.

- A. Outstanding Safety Culture Award – Federal and Contractor Employees: Nominees for these individual awards must meet the following minimum criteria:

- Nominees for this award category shall include individuals who have completed significant achievements related to safety culture improvement initiatives.
- Nominees must have been employed for at least six months by DOE or a direct contractor of the Department.
- Nominees must have performed at the “Meets Expectations” level (or the equivalent rating for Contractor personnel) on their last performance appraisal¹.
- Individuals will not be eligible for an award if they were the subject of a disciplinary action during the same year as the award nomination.

B. Outstanding Safety Culture Team Award: Nominees must meet the following minimum criteria:

- Group nominations shall include primary members of a team whose task or responsibility included the review, development, organization, management, or tracking of a safety culture improvement initiative.
- Nominees must have been employed for at least six months by DOE or a direct contractor of the Department.
- Nominees must have performed at the “Meets Expectations” level (or the equivalent rating for Contractor personnel) on their last performance appraisal².
- Individuals will not be eligible for an award if they were the subject of disciplinary action during the same year as the award nomination.

IV. NOMINATION PROCESS

A. The Co-Chairs of the SCIP formally solicit nominations for the Outstanding Safety Culture Awards Program by memorandum. The solicitation request covers the performance period of the previous fiscal year. A sample memo is located in Appendix A and a typical timeline is located in Appendix B.

B. Nominations may be initiated at any level of the organization (usually the employee's immediate supervisor) and must be approved through the full supervisory chain of command (line management) to achieve the submittal deadline.

- Nominees may not compete in more than one category in the same fiscal year.
- The signature of the immediate supervisor confirms that the nominees meet the minimum criteria as defined in Section III, *Eligibility*.

C. Nomination packages, including those submitted by contractors, must be approved and signed by the applicable Field/Site Element or Headquarters Element Approving Official.

¹ This criteria is not applicable if the nominee does not have an annual performance appraisal on file.

² This criteria is not applicable if the nominee does not have an annual performance appraisal on file.

The Approving Official is usually a Deputy/Associate Administrator, Assistant Secretary, or Field/Site Element Manager.

- D. Each Headquarters Element, Site or Field Element Approving Official can only submit one nomination package for each category.
- E. All nomination packages must be received by the SCIP Executive Secretary by the deadline stated in the solicitation memo.
- F. The SCIP Executive Secretary emails the submitting office confirming receipt of a complete nomination package. At the discretion of the SCIP, package errors or omissions may be coordinated with the submitting office.

V. NOMINATION PACKAGE REQUIREMENTS

Each Award nomination must contain the following completed sections:

- A. A nomination form must be complete and signed by the appropriate officials for each nominee or team. (Note: A separate nomination form is NOT required for each member of a team. The last sheet of the nomination form allows each team member to be listed.) Ensure all individual names are spelled as each should appear on a certificate. The required nomination form is located in Appendix C.
- B. The award narrative is required as part of the nomination.
 - The award narrative must be no more than two pages long.
 - Narratives may only include accomplishments within the award period (Fiscal Year 20XY: October 1, 20XX – September 31, 20XY). However, for a team award, the activities may begin before October 1, but must have completed its intended purpose or project scope (the reason for the team’s charter or assignment) within the current year of nomination.
 - All narratives must include identified accomplishments and/or initiatives that clearly demonstrate the Safety Culture Focus Areas and Associated Attributes found in DOE Guide 450.4-1C, Integrated Safety Management System Guide, Attachment 10. The narrative also must include how the nominee or team strives for excellence while emphasizing continuous improvement and long-term performance.

- Narratives must include at least one of the following three italicized headers (i.e., the Safety Culture Focus Areas) with appropriate write-ups in each section.
 1. *Leadership*: Describe significant accomplishments and/or initiatives that promotes, fosters, and exemplifies at least one of the following traits:
 - Demonstrated safety leadership
 - Risk-informed, conservative decision making
 - Management engagement and time in the field
 - Staff recruitment, selection, retention, and development
 - Open communication and fostering an environment free from retribution
 - Clear expectations and accountability
 2. *Employee / Worker Engagement*: Describe significant accomplishments and/or initiatives that promotes, fosters, and exemplifies at least one of the following traits:
 - Personal commitment to everyone's safety
 - Teamwork and mutual respect
 - Participation in work planning and improvement
 - Mindful of hazards and controls
 3. *Organizational Learning*: Describe significant accomplishments and/or initiatives that promotes, fosters, and exemplifies at least one of the following traits:
 - Credibility, trust, and reporting errors and problems
 - Effective resolution of reported problems
 - Performance monitoring through multiple means
 - Use of operational experience
 - Questioning attitude
- More information about each of these Safety Culture Focus Areas and associated traits can be found in Attachment 10 of DOE Guide 450.4-1C, *Integrated Safety Management System Guide*.

VI. SELECTION PROCESS

- A. The SCIP Executive Secretary will convene an Awards Panel. It will consist of the Executive Secretary and at least four other active SCIP members representing different Departmental Elements. The Awards Panel members are approved by the SCIP Co-Chairs.

- B. Following the solicitation period, the SCIP Executive Secretary or designee will review each nomination package to ensure that it meets all the requirements laid out in Section III, *Eligibility*, and Section V, *Nomination Package Requirements*. If the package meets all the requirements, it is considered to be complete and will be forwarded to the Awards Panel members.
- C. The Awards Panel members will be responsible for reviewing each nomination package. Individually, the Awards Panel members will rank nominations as first, second, and third in each category to the SCIP Executive Secretary. The Awards Panel members will be judging each package based on the achievements and initiatives described in the nomination packages that demonstrate the Safety Culture Focus Areas and Associated Attributes from Attachment 10 of DOE G 450.4-1C.
- D. The SCIP Executive Secretary, or designee will give the following points for each ranked nominee:
- For every first place, three (3) points will be awarded.
 - For every second place, two (2) points will be awarded.
 - For every third place, one (1) point will be awarded.
- E. After all of the Awards Panel members rankings have been received, the SCIP Executive Secretary will add up and enter the composite score on the nomination forms.
- F. The highest score in each category will be recommended by the Awards Panel to the SCIP Co-Chairs for approval.
- G. The SCIP Co-Chairs are the final approval authority to grant any award and will approve awardees in three categories if complete nomination packages are received.
- H. The Executive Secretary will arrange for the certificates to be prepared and signed by the Secretary of Energy.

VII. AWARD BUDGETING, FUNDING, AND CEREMONY

- A. The Department established the Outstanding Safety Culture Awards Program to recognize its employees for their outstanding accomplishments and contributions to its missions while enhancing the safety culture in the workforce. All Federal and contractor employees who are nominated under this Awards program will receive recognition. The awardees will receive a certificate signed by the Approving Officials.
- B. The Department will recognize awardees during the SCIP Annual Meeting or another appropriate event. The SCIP Executive Secretary will inform nominating offices of the date

and location for the ceremony and any other logistical details for recognizing the Outstanding Safety Culture Award Program recipients.

- C. The SCIP Executive Secretary will oversee the planning of the ceremony and the presentation of certificates.
- D. Nominating organizations are responsible for travel related costs for the awardees to attend the award ceremony. The entire team may attend the ceremony; however, variances might be reasonable due to mission or funding conflicts.

VIII. NOTIFICATIONS

Once final award selections have been approved by the Co-Chairs of the SCIP, the SCIP Executive Secretary will notify the Headquarters Element and/or Site/Field Element Approving Official, or the designated point of contact, via email of the nomination selection. Once notified, organizations may inform award recipients of their selection to receive an award from the Outstanding Safety Culture Award Program. Nominating organizations will receive additional information from the SCIP Executive Secretary relating to the Awards Ceremony and presentations.

IX. POINTS OF CONTACT

The Department of Energy SCIP Executive Secretary, represented by the Office of Environment, Health, Safety and Security is responsible for managing and administering the Outstanding Safety Culture Award Program.

APPENDIX A – SAMPLE MEMORANDUM

**The Department of Energy**

Washington, DC 20585

MEMORANDUM FOR DEPARTMENTAL ELEMENTS

FROM: SAFETY CULTURE IMPROVEMENT PANEL CO-CHAIRS

SUBJECT: Call for 20XX Safety Culture Award Nominations

The Safety Culture Improvement Panel are pleased to solicit your nominations for the 20XX Outstanding Safety Culture Awards Program. This enterprise-wide awards program has been specifically developed to recognize the exemplary work and contributions of DOE and/or DOE contractor individuals who exemplify the Safety Culture Focus Areas as defined by Attachment 10 of DOE G 450.4-1C, *Integrated Safety Management System Guide*. These awards represent the highest non-monetary recognition for the Department's individuals and teams that promote the effective implementation of safety culture concepts.

The award period will cover activities, initiatives, and accomplishments in fiscal year 20XX. We seek to recognize those professionals directly contributing to the safety culture of our personnel, our programs, and resources in these categories:

- Safety Culture Award - Federal Employee
- Safety Culture Award - Contractor Employee
- Safety Culture Team Award

Program guidelines and procedures for submitting nominations are outlined in the attached guide. In accordance with the Guide, Sites/Field Offices and Headquarters Elements may submit one nominee for each category.

Award nominations are due to the SCIP Executive Secretary at XXXXX,XXXXX@hq.doe.gov by XXX. Awardees will be honored during the SCIP Annual Meeting scheduled for XXXX.

This award program provides us with a terrific opportunity to appreciate individual and team accomplishments in regard to safety culture; thus, we encourage full participation and support in nominating those outstanding individuals and teams. Additional program information and links to the Nomination Form are located at: <https://powerpedia.energy.gov/wiki/>

If you have any questions, feel free to contact XXXXX at (202) 586-XXXX.

Enclosure

APPENDIX B – TYPICAL TIMELINE

Outstanding Safety Culture Awards Program Typical Timeline

- Fiscal Year XY: October 1, 20XX – September 30, 20XY: Performance Award Period
- November 20XY: Call for Nominations
- December 31, 20XY: Nominations Due
- January 1 - January 30, 20XZ: Nomination Package Review for Completeness
- February 1 – 28, 20XZ: Award Panel Review and Rankings
- March 1- 30, 20XZ: Award Panel recommends approval of nominees
- April 1 – 30, 20XZ: SCIP Co-Chairs approve the award winners
- May 1 - 31, 20XZ: Award Winners are notified
- August 1 – 30, 20XZ: Annual SCIP Meeting including Award Ceremony

APPENDIX C – NOMINATION FORM