



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Monday, February 23, 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR: HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: KAY COLES JAMES, Director

Subject: Safety and Security of Federal Workforce Survey Results

Thank you to those who have responded to the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) second annual survey of safety and security measures in Federal workplaces. Already we have heard from more agencies than we did at the completion of last year's survey. Department and agency heads are responsible for the safety and security of Federal employees and must direct that adequate efforts are undertaken to ensure worker safety and that those steps are clearly known through drills and other communications. Since September 11th, the Administration has worked diligently to increase safety and security procedures for Federal employees. I am encouraged by the interim results of the current survey which indicate that the Administration's concern is being taken very seriously by departments and agencies.

The key to ensuring the Federal Government maintains its ability to carry out basic, necessary agency functions is advance planning and preparation. A few areas highlight these interim results. In this year's survey we added a question regarding designation of emergency personnel. Over the past six months OPM has conducted two training sessions to inform agencies how to designate emergency personnel. More than 250 senior government officials from 75 agencies attended the seminars. The survey indicates that 87 percent of all reporting agencies now have designated emergency personnel.

Initial results indicate a slight decrease in the number of agencies who have said they are communicating their safety plans and changes, conducted "town hall" meetings or met with unions for communication assistance. I would strongly encourage every agency to work closely with employees and their representatives, including unions, in all efforts to develop recommendations and to disseminate information. Agencies are best prepared when employees, and not just managers, know and understand their roles and responsibilities during an emergency. It is also important that as a team we all continue our efforts to practice shelter in place and employee emergency notifications. As I have pointed out in previous memos, you have at your disposal your agency's Chief Human Capital Officer who is prepared to help you with this and other issues of importance affecting your workforce.

In 2004 survey, OPM added a question on teleworking. As we have learned in the Washington metropolitan area during Hurricane Isabel and other weather-related emergencies, members of the Federal team who operate under approved telework plans provide vital services when our offices are temporarily inaccessible. I would encourage agencies to broaden employee

involvement in telework programs as a means of increasing agency capacity for continued operations during all emergencies.

The interim results also indicate a 52 percent increase in the number of agencies that have already conducted shelter in place drills. This is an important aspect of your agencies' preparedness because professionals in emergency planning know there may be situations where the safest course of action for employees is to stay sheltered in their building until incident information is officially verified rather than contributing to the congestion or increasing personal risk by not being in a building or being trapped and unprotected in severe traffic congestion.

As agency heads, we should give our personal attention to ensuring the safety of our special needs employees during an emergency. I am very pleased to report that 92 percent of agencies have reported positive action in this area. Our efforts will not be complete until every special needs employee understands the procedures that would directly impact their safety and security in an emergency.

OPM produced a series of emergency guides for Federal employees, managers and families. Most agencies have provided these guides to new employees and made all employees aware of this valuable resource every year. These guides can be downloaded at www.opm.gov.

Again, I thank you for your commitment to the safety of our Federal team. If your staff has further questions, they should not hesitate to contact Clarence Crawford, our Associate Director for Management and Chief Financial Officer. Mr. Crawford can be reached at 202-606-1918, or by email at cccrawfo@opm.gov.

cc:

Chief Human Capital Officers

Human Resources Director