

Selected Essays  
*From the*  
***2003EPA Office of Research& Development Climate Survey***

- Despite email and the like, there is no real communication in the organization and no consistent mechanism to share knowledge. ... The problem with ORD [Office of Research and Development] is that management cuts off the legs of the scientists below the knee and then asks them to run faster.
- It appears that upper management and staff play by two different sets of rules. For example, a member of upper level management was caught blatantly lying. This fact was pointed out to higher levels of management within ORD. The result- nothing known. The interpretation: lying is fine when management. A complete lack of communication exists leading to the strong distrust that is present today.
- [O]ur Director has actually ordered many of us, in writing, not to communicate with anyone beyond NHEERL [National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory] . . . no networking, no resourcefulness, just goose-stepping obedience!
- I feel that ORD upper managers withhold information in order to maintain control over labs/centers/offices. I have the distinct feeling that those in Washington, DC, feel that they know best and there is little need to explain anything to the other locations. It is difficult to obtain responses to inquiries made even from RTP [Research Triangle Park], let alone the more remote sites. It is a mystery to me because we should be working together as a team. But my take on it is that ORD only cares about field input when it needs to collect data for the Agency or for Congress.
- This could be a great research organization. We need scientific leadership, not someone who's been in marketing or graduated from law school to direct research within ORD.
- Management has displaced many scientists from their fields of expertise, resulting in a tremendous loss of productivity and reputation in ORD.
- I truly believe the ORD work climate has significantly worsened in recent years. I find the lack of commitment to the quality of research in the EPA to be disheartening. The majority of EPA researchers believe that producing publications no matter how inconsequential or irrelevant, best supports their career advancement. Management reinforces this by not holding scientists to high standards, and I continually see ill-conceived and poorly reasoned or justified research efforts whose sole goal is to produce a publication.

- Why haven't you gotten the message by now that NHEERL [National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory] is in deep trouble? As the saying goes, the fish rots at the head! The constant pervasive negativity and mean-spirited atmosphere in this organization demoralizes people within days of arriving on board.
- [I will be most proud of ORD in the future when we] have an Administration in Washington that takes the environment seriously and is not so concerned with what makes big business and the oil industry happy; when the Administration doesn't reject the advice of its own scientists for political gains; and when good science instead of politics comes first.
- The current Presidential commitment to regulatory rollback presents a special challenge to ORD's AA [Assistant Administrator]. It's vitally important to morale in ORD that he carry the message that ORD supports good science to support regulatory decisions, and that good science will prevail. (Will EPA shy away from regulating perchlorate in groundwater if needed because the Department of Defense would be unhappy?)
- Many of us in the labs feel like we work for contracts, OARM [Office of Administration and Resource Management] and HRMD [Human Resources Management Division] rather than they be service groups who work to make sure the science can get done.

###