

20506, or call area code (202) 606-8322, TDD (202) 606-8282. Advance notice of any special needs or accommodations is appreciated.

Nancy E. Weiss,

Advisory Committee Management Officer.

[FR Doc. 99-1435 Filed 1-21-99; 8:45 am]

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NATIONAL FOUNDATION ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES

Meeting of the National Museum Services Board

AGENCY: Institute of Museum and Library Services, NFAH.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: This notice sets forth the agenda of a forthcoming meeting of the National Museum Services Board. This notice also describes the function of the Board. Notice of this meeting is required under the Government through the Sunshine Act (Public Law 94-409) and regulations of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, 45 CFR 1180.84.

TIME/DATE: 10:00 pm—12:00 pm—Friday, February 5, 1999.

STATUS: Open.

ADDRESS: the Madison Hotel, Fifteenth and M Streets, NW, Drawing Rooms I and II, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 862-1600.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Elizabeth Lyons, Special Assistant to the Director, Institute of Museum and Library Services, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Room 510, Washington, DC 20506, (202) 606-4649.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The National Museum Services Board is established under the Museum Services Act, Title II of the Arts, Humanities, and Cultural Affairs Act of 1976, Public Law 94-462. The Board has responsibility for the general policies with respect to the powers, duties, and authorities vested in the Institute under the Museum Services Act.

The meeting on Friday, February 5, 1999 will be open to the public. If you need special accommodations due to a disability, please contact: Institute of Museum and Library Services, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20506-(202) 606-8536—TDD (202) 606-8636 at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting date.

74th Meeting of the National Museum Service Board, The Madison Hotel, 15th and M Streets, NW, Drawing Rooms I and II, Washington, DC, February 5, 1999, 10:00 AM—12:30 PM

Agenda

- I. Chairman's Welcome and Approval of the Minutes of the 73rd NMSB Meeting—September 28, 1998
 - II. Director's Report
 - III Appropriations Report
 - IV. Legislative/Public Affairs Report
 - V. Office of Research and Technology Report
 - VI. Office of Museum Services Program Report
 - VII. Office of Library Services Reports
- Dated: January 14, 1999.

Linda Bell,

Director of Policy, Planning and Budget, National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities, Institute of Museum and Library Services.

[FR Doc. 99-1496 Filed 1-21-99; 8:45 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Public Comment on Recommended Improvements to the Oversight Processes for Nuclear Power Reactors

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Request for public comment.

SUMMARY: The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is proposing significant revisions to its processes for overseeing the safety performance of commercial nuclear power plants that include integrating the processes. As part of its proposal, the NRC staff established a new regulatory oversight framework with a set of performance indicators and associated thresholds, developed a new baseline inspection program that supplements and verifies the performance indicators, and created a continuous assessment process that includes a methodology for grading the regulatory response to performance on the basis of information derived from the performance indicators and inspection findings. The changes are the result of continuing work following public comment and workshops held on a previously noticed concept, the integrated review of the assessment process (IRAP) ["Public Comment on the Integrated Review of the Assessment Process for Commercial Nuclear Power Reactors," August 7, 1998; 63 *FR* 152, 42439]. Public comments are requested on the proposed regulatory framework, baseline inspection program, assessment process, and associated assessment tools. The NRC is soliciting comments

from interested public interest groups, the regulated industry, States, and concerned citizens. The NRC staff will consider comments it receives in developing a final proposal for implementing the new processes.

DATES: The comment period expires February 22, 1999. Comments received after this date will be considered if it is practical to do so, but the Commission is able to ensure consideration only for comments received on or before this date.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments to: Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, Mail Stop: T-6 D59, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001. Hand deliver comments to: 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, between 7:45 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. on Federal workdays. Copies of comments received may be examined at the NRC's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, NW. (Lower Level), Washington, DC.

Copies of SECY-99-007 and its attachments may be obtained from the NRC's Public Document Room at 2120 L St., N.W., Washington, DC 20003-1527, telephone 202-634-3273. Copies also may be obtained from the NRC's Internet web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/COMMISSION/SECYS/index.html#1999>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Timothy J. Frye, Mail Stop: O-5 H4, Inspection Program Branch, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, telephone 301-415-1287.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Over the years, the NRC has developed and implemented different licensee performance assessment processes to address the specific assessment needs of the agency at the time. The systematic assessment of licensee performance (SALP) process was implemented in 1980 following the accident at Three Mile Island to allow for the systematic, long-term, integrated evaluation of overall licensee performance. The senior management meeting (SMM) process was implemented in 1986, following the loss-of-feedwater event at Davis-Besse, to bring to the attention of the highest levels of NRC management to plan a coordinated agency course of action for those plants the performance of which was of most concern to the agency. The plant performance review (PPR) process was implemented in 1990 to periodically adjust NRC's inspection

focus in response to changes in licensee performance and emerging plant issues.

Integrated Review of the Assessment Process

In September 1997, the NRC began an integrated review of the processes used for assessing performance by commercial nuclear power plant licensees. The NRC staff presented to the Commission a conceptual design for a new integrated assessment process in Commission paper SECY-98-045, dated March 9, 1998, and briefed the Commission on the concept at a public meeting on April 2, 1998. SECY-98-045 requested the Commission's approval to solicit public input on the proposed concepts. On June 30, 1998, the Commission issued a staff requirements memorandum (SRM) in response to SECY-98-045 that approved the staff's request to solicit public comment on the concepts presented in the Commission paper [63 FR 152].

Industry Proposal

In parallel with the staff's work on the IRAP and the development of other assessment tools, the nuclear power industry independently developed a proposal for a new assessment and regulatory oversight process. This proposal took a risk-informed and performance-based approach to the inspection, assessment, and enforcement of licensee activities on the basis of the results of a set of performance indicators. This proposal was developed by the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) and is further described in "Minutes of the July 28, 1998, Meeting With the Nuclear Energy Institute to Discuss Performance Indicators and Performance Assessment," dated July 30, 1998.

Public Workshop

The staff set out to develop a single set of recommendations for making improvements to the regulatory oversight processes in response to NEI's proposal, the Commission's comments on the IRAP proposal, and comments made at a Commission meeting on July 17, 1998, with public and industry stakeholders and the hearing before the Senate on July 31, 1998.

The IRAP public comment period, which ended on October 6, 1998, and a series of public meetings were used to facilitate internal and external input into the development of these recommendations. As part of the public comment period, the staff sponsored a 4-day public workshop from September 28 through October 1, 1998, to allow participation by the industry and the public in improving the regulatory

oversight processes. During the workshop, the participants reached a consensus on the overall philosophy for regulatory oversight and generally agreed on the defining principles for the oversight processes.

Task Groups

Following the public workshop, the NRC staff formed three task groups to complete the work begun at the workshop and to develop the recommendations for the integrated oversight processes: a technical framework task group, an inspection task group, and an assessment process task group. The technical framework task group was responsible for completing the assessment framework, which included defining the strategic areas and cornerstones of licensee performance that need to be measured to ensure that unacceptable risks are not imposed on the public as a result of the operation of nuclear power reactors, and for identifying the performance indicators (PIs) and appropriate thresholds that could be used to measure performance. The inspection task group was responsible for developing the scope, the depth, and the frequency of a risk-informed baseline inspection program that would be used to supplement and verify the PIs. The assessment process task group developed methods for integrating PI data and inspection data, determining NRC action on the basis of assessment results, and communicating results to licensees and the public. Other staff activities to improve the enforcement process were coordinated with these three task groups to ensure that changes to the enforcement process were properly evaluated in the framework structure and that changes to the inspection and assessment programs were integrated with the changes to the enforcement program. The task groups completed their work between October and December 1998, and developed recommendations to be presented to the Commission.

Scope of the Public Comment Period

The NRC staff's recommendations for an integrated oversight process are presented in SECY-99-007, "Recommendation for Reactor Oversight Process Improvements," dated January 8, 1999, and its attachments. The SECY paper also includes the staff's evaluation of public comments received on IRAP. This public comment period will focus on obtaining industry and public views on how the NRC should implement the processes for overseeing and assessing licensee performance.

The NRC seeks public comment and feedback on the specific topics highlighted in the questions below. Commenters are not limited to and are not obligated to address every issue discussed in the questions. In providing comments, please key your response to the number of the applicable question (e.g., "Response to A.1."). Comments should be as specific as possible. The use of examples is encouraged.

Comments are requested on the following issues.

A. Regulatory Oversight Framework, Performance Indicators, and Thresholds

1. Framework Structure

The oversight framework includes cornerstones of safety that (1) limit the frequency of initiating events; (2) ensure the availability, reliability, and capability of mitigating systems; (3) ensure the integrity of the fuel cladding, the reactor coolant system, and containment boundaries; (4) ensure the adequacy of the emergency preparedness functions; (5) protect the public from exposure to radioactive material releases; (6) protect nuclear plant workers from exposure to radiation; and (7) provide assurance that the physical protection system can protect against the design-basis threat of radiological sabotage. Are there any other significant areas that need to be addressed in order for the NRC to meet its mission of ensuring that commercial nuclear power plants are operated in a manner that provides adequate protection of public health and safety and the environment and protects against radiological sabotage and the theft or diversion of special nuclear materials?

2. Performance Bands

The oversight framework includes thresholds for determining licensee performance within four performance bands: a licensee response band, an increased regulatory response band, a required regulatory response band, and an unacceptable performance band. The thresholds between the bands were selected to identify significant deviations from nominal industry performance and to differentiate between levels of risk significance, as indicated by PIs or inspection findings. Are there alternative means of setting thresholds between the bands that should be considered?

3. Performance Indicators

The NRC staff developed a set of 20 indicators to measure important attributes of the seven areas listed in question 1 above. The PIs, together with

findings from associated baseline inspections in attributes not fully measured or not measured at all by the indicators, should provide a broad sample of data on which to assess licensee performance in those important attributes. One reason these specific indicators were proposed is because they are readily available and can be implemented in a short period of time. Other indicators will be developed and included in the oversight process as their ability to measure licensee performance is determined.

Will these PIs, along with inspection findings, be effective in determining varying levels of licensee performance?

4. Other Comments

Are there any other comments related to the oversight framework, PIs, or thresholds?

B. Risk-Informed Baseline Inspections

1. Inspectable Areas

The proposed baseline inspection program is based on a set of inspectable areas that, in conjunction with the PIs, provides enough information to determine whether the objectives of each cornerstone of safety are being met. Are there any other areas not encompassed by the inspectable areas that need to be reviewed to achieve the same goal?

2. Other Comments

Are there any other comments related to the proposed baseline inspection program?

C. Assessment Process

1. Frequency of Assessments

The proposed assessment process provides four levels of review of licensee performance: continuous, quarterly, semiannual, and annual. Each successive level is performed at a higher organizational level within the NRC. The semiannual and annual periods would coincide with an annual inspection planning process and the NRC's budgeting process. Are the proposed assessment periods sufficient to maintain a current understanding of licensee performance?

2. Action Decision Model

An action matrix was developed to provide guidance for consistently considering those actions that the NRC needs to take in response to the assessed performance of licensees. The actions are categorized into four areas (management meeting, licensee action, NRC inspection, and regulatory action) and are graded across five ranges of licensee performance. The decision to

take an action would be determined directly from the threshold assessments of PIs and inspection areas. As changes in performance become more significant, more significant actions would be considered.

The action matrix is not intended to be absolute. It establishes expectations for NRC-licensee interactions, licensee actions, and NRC actions and does not preclude taking less action or additional action, when justified.

Will the use of the action matrix and underlying decision logic reasonably result in timely and effective action?

3. Communicating Assessment Results

The proposed assessment process includes several methods for communicating information to licensees and the public. First, the information being assessed (PIs and inspection results) will be made public as the information becomes available. Second, the NRC will send each licensee a letter every 6 months that describes any changes in the NRC's planned inspections for the upcoming 6 months on the basis of licensee performance. Third, each licensee will receive an annual report that includes the NRC's assessment of the licensee's performance and any associated actions taken because of that performance. In addition to issuing the annual assessment report, the NRC will hold an annual public meeting with each licensee to discuss its performance. Finally, a public meeting with the Commission will be held annually to discuss the performance at all plants. Do these reports and meetings provide sufficient opportunity for licensees and the general public to gain an understanding of performance and to interact with the NRC?

4. Other Comments

Are there any other comments related to the proposed assessment process?

E. Implementation

1. Transition Plan

The Commission paper includes a transition plan that identifies important activities needed to complete and implement the proposed processes. Are there other major activities not identified on the plan that if not accomplished could prevent successful implementation of the proposed processes?

2. Other Comments

Are there any other comments related to implementing the new processes?

F. Additional Comments

In addition to the previously mentioned issues, commenters are invited to give any other views on the NRC assessment process that could assist the NRC in improving its effectiveness.

Correction

One of the performance indicators is incorrectly stated in two places in the attachments to SECY-99-007. On page 3 of attachment 1 and page 11 of attachment 2, the indicator for Occupational Radiation Safety reads "* * * personnel exposures exceeding 10% of the stochastic or 2% of the nonstochastic limits." It should read "* * * personnel exposures exceeding 2% of the stochastic or 10% of the nonstochastic limits."

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 15th day of January 1999.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Frank P. Gillespie,

Chief, Inspection Program Branch, Division of Inspection & Support Programs, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 99-1486 Filed 1-21-99; 8:45 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Sunshine Act Meeting

AGENCY HOLDING THE MEETING: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

DATE: Weeks of January 19, 25, February 1 and 8, 1999.

PLACE: Commissioners' Conference Room, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland.

STATUS: Public and Closed.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED:

Week of January 18

Tuesday, January 19

2:00 p.m. Briefing on Status of Third Party Oversight of Millstone Station's Employee Concerns Program and Safety Conscious Work Environment (Public Meeting) (Contact: Bill Dean, 301-415-7380)

Wednesday, January 20

9:25 a.m. Affirmation Session (Public Meeting) (If Needed)

9:30 a.m. Briefing on Reactor Inspection, Enforcement And Assessment (Public Meeting) (Contact: Frank Gillespie, 301-415-1275)

Week of January 25—Tentative

There are no meetings scheduled for the Week of January 25