

January 25, 2001

MEMORANDUM William D. Travers

TO: Executive Director for Operations

FROM: Annette L. Vietti-Cook, Secretary /RA/

SUBJECT: STAFF REQUIREMENTS - BRIEFING ON STATUS OF NUCLEAR MATERIALS SAFETY, 9:30 A.M.,
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2001, COMMISSIONERS' CONFERENCE ROOM, ONE WHITE FLINT NORTH,
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND (OPEN TO PUBLIC ATTENDANCE)

The Commission was briefed by the NRC staff on status of the nuclear materials safety program. The Commission commends the staff for its accomplishments and its contribution to maintaining public health and safety. The staff should:

1. maintain sensitivity to fee related issues for materials licensees, particularly as the number of Agreement States increase and, as a consequence, the fee burden for a diminishing number of NRC licensees could potentially increase;
2. solicit input from the Agreement States on the current set of national-level strategic and performance goals to determine whether modifications are warranted, including the desirability of establishing separate subgoals for NRC and Agreement State licensees;
3. considering the input obtained in item 2, provide a recommendation to the Commission on whether the current national-level strategic and performance goals, which encompass Agreement State licensees, should include separate subgoals for those licensees regulated by NRC and those regulated by Agreement States;
(EDO) (SECY Suspend: 6/15/01)
4. ensure that performance-based initiatives are called out separately and that the difference between performance-based oversight and performance-based regulation is understood;
5. ensure that staff training in risk-informed regulation remains an important consideration;
6. ensure that the staff activities in Phase II of the Materials Oversight program and the efforts of the National Materials Working Group are clear and there is no duplication of effort; and
7. continue efforts to develop an effective external web presence to enhance communications with stakeholders.

One issue discussed at the meeting was a follow-up inspection on the extremity overexposures at an NRC-licensed facility. As part of the discussion, the staff mentioned problems with inspector accessibility to certain laboratories but did not indicate a resolution to the problem. After the meeting, the staff provided additional information indicating that two inspectors will soon be qualified to meet the unique requirements to enter the sterility lab associated with the overexposures. In addition, the inspectors will maintain their qualification through annual training. This answer is satisfactory for this specific instance. Staff should ensure that there are no other equivalent issues that would inhibit NRC inspections at other facilities.

The Commission would like the staff's recommendations as to how the meetings concerning the various arenas might be better structured so as to facilitate the efficient survey of the challenges and issues confronting the staff. The staff should propose to the Commission changes to the content and format to improve the value of future meetings for the Commission and the public.

(EDO)

(SECY Suspend: 7/27/01)

Future briefings should include a discussion of the significant issues and a discussion of the policy matters on which the staff expects to request Commission direction over the subsequent year. In future meetings, the staff should also describe how emergent issues (and trends) are monitored, forecasted, and managed.

cc: Chairman Meserve
Commissioner Dicus
Commissioner Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield
OGC
CFO
CIO
OCA
OIG
OPA

Office Directors, Regions, ACRS, ACNW, ASLBP (via E-Mail)
PDR - Advance