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NRC REVISES SALP PROGRAM
FOR EVALUATING REACTOR PERFORMANCE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is revising its Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP) program for evaluating the performance of each licensee with a nuclear power plant under construction or in operation in the United States.

The NRC uses the SALP process (1) to conduct an integrated assessment of licensee safety performance that focuses on the safety significance of NRC findings and conclusions during an assessment period, (2) to help make decisions on allocation of NRC oversight and inspection resources, (3) to provide a vehicle for meaningful dialogue with licensees regarding their safety performance and (4) to inform the public of NRC's view of licensee performance.

The primary product of the SALP process is the SALP report, which communicates the results of the assessment. The NRC and the licensee meet during a special public SALP meeting--normally held near the facility--to discuss the results of the SALP assessment. The normal length of a SALP assessment period is 18 months.

At the conclusion of a SALP assessment period, a SALP Board convenes in the appropriate NRC regional office. The Board assesses performance--using as background information provided by members of the NRC regional and headquarters staff who have inspection and oversight responsibility for the site--and assigns a recommended category rating for each of several functional areas. Category 1 is assigned for superior performance and Category 2 for good performance. The lowest SALP rating, Category 3, represents acceptable performance, although the margin to unacceptable performance may be small. The NRC does not rely on the SALP program to identify unacceptable performance. In addition, the NRC discourages the use of SALP data for other than its intended purpose.

Changes made to the program include reducing the number of functional evaluation areas from seven to four: plant

operations, maintenance, engineering and plant support. Plant support now includes the previous functional areas of radiation protection, emergency preparedness and security in addition to chemistry, housekeeping and fire protection. Safety assessment/quality verification issues, which were previously considered within a separate functional area, are now considered in all functional areas.

Under the revised SALP program, the membership of the SALP board is reduced from six to four, and all members will be from the Senior Executive Service. The Board provides recommendations to the appropriate NRC regional administrator, who issues the SALP report.

Additional changes to the SALP program are the elimination of the previous SALP practice of indicating trends (such as "improving") in category ratings, emphasis on recent licensee performance (within the last 6 months) when determining the SALP category ratings, and reduction of the report length to promote clearer communications with the licensee and public.

The NRC staff implemented these changes to the SALP program for assessment periods ending after July 19, 1993.

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