

## CHARTER FOR THE NRC / AGREEMENT STATE WORKING GROUP ON EVENT REPORTING

The NRC Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards (NMSS) has formed a working group to provide NRC management with recommendations for making the reporting and assessment of material events more effective, efficient and realistic. Agreement States and NRC Regions have raised concerns that the resources required to submit event reports and respond to requests for additional information are having a significant impact on their programs. In addition, NRC management has a growing perception that certain parts (i.e., briefings, etc.) of the materials event program are inefficient. Although NRC Headquarters conducted a self-assessment last year (see SECY-99-005, Self-Assessment of Operational Safety Data Review Processes), a review by the internal stakeholders is needed to address these concerns. The quality of materials event data is important because it is used to measure outcomes and determine if the performance measures in the NRC Strategic Plan (NUREG-1614) have been met. The working group is composed of representatives of State governments and NRC. The working group will coordinate its efforts with the Steering Committee for the National Materials Program Working Group and produce a draft and a final report with findings and recommendations for the Steering Committee and NRC management's consideration.

### **The Mission:**

The mission is to develop recommendations for making the materials event program more effective, efficient and realistic. The program should implement the following philosophy:

*To create a true partnership of the NRC and the States that will ensure protection of public health, safety, and the environment while:*

*optimizing resources of federal, state, professional and industrial organizations;*

*accounting for individual agency needs and abilities;*

*promoting consensus on regulatory priorities;*

*promoting consistent exchange of information; and*

*harmonizing regulatory approaches while recognizing state and federal needs for flexibility.*

To accomplish the mission, the working group will undertake the following tasks to prepare a report on the event information collected:

1. The working group will review the NRC Strategic Plan and identify what event information related to safety and environmental protection is needed to implement the plan and the activities derived from the Materials and Waste Safety portions of the Plan. Then, the group will review current NRC reporting requirements (and associated Agreement State compatibility assignments) and determine whether the information required supports implementation of the plan. The group will recommend how to resolve any discrepancies between the information needed and the information required by regulation. The review should consider the health and safety significance of the information. The group may use

this as an opportunity to recommend changes to the Strategic Plan. The purpose of this is to determine if the NRC and the Agreement States are collecting the right safety information across the nation, and at the right level of detail.

2. The working group will examine guidance to licensees on event reporting. NMSS believes that existing event reporting guidance may contribute to the inconsistent quality of event reports submitted by licensees. The group is expected to consider whether the quality of event data could be improved by providing improved guidance to licensees. The working group should determine whether guidance is available, whether it is adequate, and whether licensees are aware of it. In addition, the group should note any changes that would require rulemaking.

To accomplish the mission, the working group will undertake the following additional tasks to prepare a report on the use of event information after it is received:

3. The group is expected to review the event information provided to NMED, and recommend how the quantity, quality, and consistency of event information can be improved. The information NMED receives on events has improved greatly in recent years and NRC staff believes that events with significant safety issues are being captured (i.e., overexposures, major misadministrations, loss of sealed sources). However, some less-significant events (i.e., loss of control of low levels of unsealed radioactive material) may be under-reported, and, if so, these less-significant events are not captured in NMED. In addition, important initial and follow up information is missing for some events. Several performance measures in the NRC Strategic Plan are based on NMED data, and missing or incomplete NMED data are a concern for NRC. The working group will assess whether necessary event information (as determined under Task 1) is under-reported, and, if needed, recommend improvements to the reporting process.
4. The working group will review the NMSS Generic Issues Program to identify opportunities to improve the program. NRC staff has noted that the program is labor intensive and is concerned that significant issues may be missed in the large volume of reports reviewed. NRC believes that the materials event assessment program has not been explained well and many stakeholders do not understand why materials event data are required, or how they are processed and analyzed. Internal stakeholders have expressed concerns about duplicative efforts, lack of coordination, and participation on the part of the Agreement States. The Generic Assessment Panel (GAP) has experienced problems where information has been lost or misdirected. The group should address the need to assess each event for 1) its significance for the affected licensee, 2) its significance for other licensees, and 3) its significance for regulators and the adequacy of their programs. The group is expected to review the program and offer recommendations in the following areas: 1) Describe what analyses should be conducted, who should conduct the analyses, when should the analyses be conducted, and how the results of the analyses should be utilized and shared nationally; and 2) identify where internal stakeholder communication and participation, and effectiveness and efficiency can be improved, especially with respect to analyzing events meeting the thresholds in the Strategic Plan, trends and precursor events.
5. The working group will examine the use of computer systems that support the event reporting and assessment process. NMSS believes there is room for improvement in the computer systems that support the materials event program. The group is expected to review the various systems used to create event reports, archive event data, and track followup actions. The group should recommend improvements that would make the

systems more comprehensive, easier to use, or would reduce duplication of effort. In addition, the following specific issues should be addressed:

- a. Should NRC delay the posting of event reports on the external NRC website? Recommendation no. 22 from the Incident Response Function Self Assessment Report states that IRO and STP should work with OCIO to identify approaches to allow for a reasonable time delay (24 hours minimum) in posting 24-hour material event reports on the NRC external website.
- b. Should NRC continue the use of separate event tracking systems in each office, or should one tracking system be used by NMSS and the Regions? This issue was raised during the 1999 Region IV IMPEP Review.
- c. Should NMED be made available to the public, and if so, what conditions and restrictions should be applied?
- d. Should NRC and the Agreement States participate in the IAEA materials event database, and what information would we share with IAEA?

**Schedule:**

The working group will complete the project by March 2001.

- First working group meeting in Rockville, Maryland (April 4 - 5, 2000).
- Conference call status report (May 23, 2000)
- Second working group meeting in Austin, Texas (June 21-22, 2000)
- Conference call status report (July 26, 2000)
- Third working group meeting in Rockville, Maryland (September 6-7, 2000)
- Brief Steering Committee on actions to date and plans for future (late Sept. 2000).
- Working Group conference call to discuss Steering Committee comments and status of efforts (early October 2000)
- Prepare rough draft of report and provide to Steering Committee for review (Nov. 2000)
- Brief Steering Committee on draft report (early December 2000)

- Working Group conference call to discuss Steering Committee comments and actions to complete final report (mid December 2000).
- Prepare draft final report and provide to Steering Committee for final review (late January 2001)
- Brief Steering Committee on final report (February 2001)
- Make final changes and issue report (March 2001)