



**UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
REGION IV  
611 RYAN PLAZA DRIVE, SUITE 400  
ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76011-8064**

June 13, 2002

**MEMORANDUM TO:** Ellis Merschoff  
Regional Administrator

**FROM:** Thomas H. Andrews Jr.  
Emergency Response Coordinator

**SUBJECT:** REGION IV OBSERVATIONS FROM THE  
ARKANSAS NUCLEAR ONE EXERCISE

On March 27 and 28, 2002, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission participated with Arkansas Nuclear One in their biennial evaluated exercise. On March 27, the NRC participated from Headquarters, the Region IV Incident Response Center, and on-site. On March 28, participation was limited to a reduced staff from the site team. The State of Arkansas, local officials, and various Federal agencies also participated.

Prior to the exercise, objectives were identified to evaluate the Region IV participation. The list of objectives was very comprehensive. Each of the objectives were assigned to the various team members primarily responsible for performing the tasks. A handbook was provided to participants to discuss these objectives and identified criteria for determining if the objectives were met. This ensured that team members had a good understanding what was expected of them and contributed to a more thorough self-assessment of the Region IV response capabilities. A list of the objectives is attached.

All of the objectives established prior to the exercise were met during the exercise. As part of the critique, there were comments about difficulties associated with licensee facilities being cramped, crowded, or not equipped to readily support site team equipment. While efforts are made to inform licensees of our needs ahead of time, we do not have regulatory authority to force changes. Therefore, these are situations that NRC responders will have to face during a real response. The site team did a very good job adapting to the difficulties or working with the licensee to make the necessary accommodations.

A summary of the critique comments is attached. Based upon these comments, actions will be taken to incorporate suggested changes in the Region IV program, where appropriate.

I want to extend my appreciation for the support received from the base team, site team, and from Region IV management in preparing and participating in this exercise. This exercise was considered to be a successful training opportunity for our response personnel. The comments received will help to continue improving our program.

cc (by e-mail):

Dick Wessman, IRO  
Joseph Holonich, IRO  
Jane Gunn, IRO  
Doug Weaver, IRO  
Felicia Hinson, Region I  
James Hufham, Region II  
James Foster, Region III

## Attachment 1 - Arkansas Nuclear One 2002 Exercise - NRC Objectives

- The Region will demonstrate proper implementation of management notification.
- The Region will demonstrate timely decision making.
- The Base Team will demonstrate timely activation of the Incident Response Center.
- If the initial response decision is to enter the Monitoring Phase of Normal Mode, the Base Team will demonstrate transition from the Monitoring Phase of Normal Mode to Standby or Initial Activation when the decision is made to escalate to a higher response mode.
- The Base Team will discuss the process and priorities to be used to dispatch the Site Team when the agency enters Initial Activation.
- The Base Team will demonstrate the ability to coordinate use of a charter jet service to an airport in the proximity of the site to reduce the amount of time needed to get a Site Team onsite.
- The Base Team will demonstrate the ability to monitor and assess licensee actions to deal with plant conditions.
- The Base Team will demonstrate the ability to interface with state and local agencies, and other regional Federal organizations, providing information as requested.
- The Site Team will demonstrate proper personnel protection protocol by conducting a protective measures briefing, including briefing on the use of potassium iodide.
- The Site Team will demonstrate proper team safety by obtaining a briefing on site conditions and route restrictions prior to simulating entering the emergency planning zone.
- The Site Team will demonstrate the ability to quickly integrate into the licensee's facilities.
- The Site Team will demonstrate the ability to monitor and assess licensee actions to deal with plant conditions.
- The Site Team will demonstrate the ability to provide technical assessment of conditions and develop protective action recommendations.
- The Site Team will demonstrate the ability to interface with state and local government agencies and participating regional Federal agencies, providing information as requested.
- The Site Team will demonstrate the ability to integrate the NRC public affairs process into the licensee Joint Information Center.

- The Site Team will demonstrate the ability to generate status summaries from the licensee's Emergency Operations Facility.
- The Post-Plume Phase team will demonstrate the ability to assist the State and locals in developing priorities for the post-plume phase assessments, coordinating the development of Federal protective action recommendations, and communicating the recommendations to the appropriate people.

Attachment 2 - Arkansas Nuclear One 2002 Exercise - Participant Observations

- **Region IV responders need training in the use of the Response Technical Manual. It has been 8-10 years since this training was provided. Following the exercise, a request was made to Headquarters to ask them to develop and conduct this training.**

Headquarters is developing a training course on the use of the Response Technical Manual. This course is expected to be available by October 2002.

- **The base team made arrangements to transport the site team to the site. The arrangements included use of a local airport near the site that would have put the site team at risk due to wind direction during a possible release. Airports should be selected that are over 10 miles away and not in the prevailing wind direction.**

A user-aid has been prepared for the Resource Manager position and attached to their Base Team procedure. This aid provides internet links to resources giving detailed information about airports near a response site. The list of airports near power reactor sites is being updated.

- **During the briefing of the site team while at the local airport near the site, conflicting information was given to the team regarding radiological conditions.**

The protective measures briefing should include person from the licensee's facility to get the latest information. This guidance will be included in future editions of the participants handbook.

- **The licensee was not expecting the site team when they arrived.**

When a decision is made to dispatch the site team, the licensee should be informed that the site team has been dispatched along with an estimated time of arrival in the area. This can either be done over the Reactor Safety Counterpart Link to the Resident Inspector who can inform the licensee, or over the Emergency Notification System directly to the licensee.

- **The briefing provided by the licensee upon site team arrival was too long and too detailed. The briefing should be limited to about 10-15 minutes.**

If the briefing is taking too long, the Site Team Leader should politely push the discussion along focusing on critical details and facility logistics. Each team member will be getting a turnover from their counterpart when they enter the center to take their positions. This guidance will be incorporated in future editions of the participant handbook.

- **There was a delay in establishing communication links from the site team due to communicators working to set up cordless telephone headsets.**

When the site team enters the licensee's emergency operations facility to take their positions, communicators should initiate links as soon as possible using regular phone line. The Emergency Response Coordinator will be tasked with setting up cordless phones and switch over when ready. This guidance will be incorporated in future editions of the participant handbook.

- **Soon after the NRC entered expanded activation, support was needed from Headquarters. However, the Headquarters team had already shut down and left. This gives the licensee the impression that once the lead transfers to the site, there is no need to keep Headquarters in the communication loop and that the site team is empowered to operate independent of Headquarters.**

The Emergency Response Coordinator will work to encourage Headquarters to extend their participation time beyond entering expanded activation.

S:\RAS\!Andrews\ANO Exercise Lessons Learned.wpd

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