

Objectives of the NRC's Reactor Operating Experience Program

The following objectives are critical to the agency's reactor OpE program:

- **OpE is collected, evaluated, communicated, and applied to support the agency goal of ensuring safety.**

This objective is the primary focus of the agency's reactor OpE program. To accomplish this objective, the agency will have an effective, coordinated program to systematically collect and evaluate OpE, identify and resolve safety issues in a timely manner, and apply lessons learned from OpE to support the agency goal of ensuring safety. The agency will share OpE information with the nuclear industry in a timely manner so the industry can ensure safety.

- **OpE is used to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and realism of NRC decisions.**

Evaluations of OpE provide fundamental information necessary to improve safety assessments and the realism of NRC decisions. Lessons learned from OpE evaluations will be used to improve NRC regulatory programs, including licensing and inspection.

- **The public, Congress, and other external stakeholders are provided with accurate, timely, and balanced information regarding operational experience, including actual or potential hazards to health and safety.**

Timely sharing of OpE information with the public, Congress, and other external stakeholders will enhance their understanding of the performance of licensed plants.

Attributes of the NRC's Reactor Operating Experience Program

To accomplish the objectives of a reactor OpE program, the following attributes are necessary for the program to be effective:

1. Clearly defined and communicated roles and responsibilities.

Management expectations are clearly articulated and communicated and organizational roles and responsibilities clearly defined. Organizational responsibilities include collection, screening, evaluation, corrective action, and followup activities. Responsibilities for internal and external coordination and communications are also clearly defined, including the interfaces between the organizations reviewing OpE and the inspection, licensing, and research organizations. A single point of contact is established to provide overall coordination for responsibilities distributed throughout the agency.

2. Efficient collection, storage, and retrieval of OpE.

Sources of OpE for collection, storage, and retrieval are identified. These sources include OpE from industry and foreign sources, as well as agency-generated information. The sources of OpE are sufficiently comprehensive and of sufficient quality to meet specific user needs and the collection and storage minimize duplication by multiple organizations. Data systems provide user-friendly retrieval capabilities for a wide range of users.

3. Effective screening of OpE for followup evaluation.

OpE is promptly screened for followup using appropriate criteria and thresholds to determine whether the OpE is, or could be, risk significant; has, or could have, generic implications; or is, or could be, important from a public confidence perspective. Priority is assigned for evaluation commensurate with the overall significance of the OpE.

4. Timely communication of OpE to stakeholders for information or evaluation.

OpE is communicated to stakeholders in a timely manner for information or evaluation. The communication clearly and concisely identifies the issue of concern and puts its significance in proper perspective.

5. Timely and thorough evaluations of OpE to identify trends, recurring events, or significant safety issues for appropriate followup actions.

Timely and thorough evaluations of OpE will involve both short-term and long-term efforts to identify trends, recurring events, or significant safety issues. Timely short-term evaluations are necessary to promptly initiate regulatory actions aimed at resolving immediate safety issues and precluding or correcting similar conditions at other facilities. Long-term evaluations to assess safety performance typically use a broader range of OpE input, including reports on individual events and conditions, performance measures, and retrospective information. Long-term evaluations also identify trends and safety issues and their implications for NRC programs. Evaluations are sufficiently thorough to understand the event or condition, contributing factors, root causes, safety significance, and generic implications. Appropriate internal and external organizations are involved, as necessary, to ensure evaluations are complete and accurate.

6. Timely decisions on implementation and appropriate followup resulting from the review of OpE.

Timely decisions and actions are taken in response to short-term and long-term evaluations of OpE. The decisions address the need for externally directed regulatory actions as well as appropriate changes to NRC programs. The OpE program identifies activities or actions necessary to ensure timely implementation and followup in response to a regulatory determination. The OpE program also assesses the effectiveness of regulatory and licensee actions taken in response to a lesson learned from the OpE program.

7. Periodic assessments of the OpE program to determine its effectiveness and to identify needed improvements.

Periodic assessment of the OpE program is conducted to determine how effective the agency has been in using OpE to reduce the severity or recurrence rate of industry events. An effectiveness review provides feedback from stakeholders to agency management and recommends corrective actions to address identified deficiencies.