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NUCLEAR

Characteristics of a Positive Safety Culture

Experience has shown that certain ^{NUCLEAR (here after, safety)} organizational attributes and personnel attitudes and behaviors are present in a positive safety culture. Therefore, in 2006, when the NRC implemented an enhanced reactor oversight process (ROP) that more fully addressed safety culture, it identified and incorporated safety culture components that are overarching characteristics of a positive safety culture. The NRC based its development of the safety culture components on a review of a variety of sources of information including the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations; the IAEA; the Nuclear Energy Agency; the regulatory approaches of other domestic and international organizations; and the organizational behavior, safety culture, and safety climate research literature.

The Commission presented drafts of the safety culture components and aspects in frequent public meetings and modified them in response to stakeholder feedback. For the purpose of this policy statement, the NRC modified the ROP safety culture components (termed "safety culture characteristics") to explicitly address security in the safety culture characteristics descriptions, create a more generic description for each safety culture characteristic that would apply to the range of NRC licensees and certificate holders, and maintain all the safety culture concepts in the safety culture components. The staff presented the draft safety culture characteristics for stakeholder comment in a February 3, 2009, public workshop and on the NRC's public safety culture Web site (<http://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/regulatory/enforcement/safetyculture.html>).

Although the safety culture characteristics themselves are applicable to all licensees and certificate holders, there may be other examples that more specifically address the unique characteristics of a licensee's or certificate holder's environment (i.e., unique for medical and industrial applications, operating reactors, research and test reactors, fuel cycle facilities, and new reactor construction environments). Hence, the Commission recognizes that these safety culture characteristics are not all inclusive; other characteristics and attitudes in organizations and individuals may be indicative of a positive safety culture.

However, the Commission expects its licensees and certificate holders to consider the extent to which these characteristics and attitudes are present in their organizations and among individuals who are overseeing or performing regulated activities and to take steps, if necessary, to foster a positive safety culture commensurate with the safety and security significance of activities and the nature and complexity of the licensee's or certificate holder's organization and functions.

The following characteristics that are indicative of a positive safety culture, are relevant across the broad range of activities carried out by the nuclear industry, the Agreement States and the NRC, and address the importance of nuclear safety and security:

- Personnel demonstrate ownership for nuclear safety and security in their day-to-day work activities by, for example, ensuring that their day-to-day work activities and products meet professional standards commensurate with the potential impacts of their work on safety and security. They proceed with caution when making safety- or security-related decisions and question their assumptions, especially when faced

with uncertain or unexpected conditions, to ensure that safety and security are maintained.

- Processes for planning and controlling work ensure that individual contributors, supervisors, and work groups communicate, coordinate, and execute their work activities in a manner that supports safety and security. For example, individuals and work groups communicate and cooperate during work projects and activities to ensure their actions do not interact with those of others to adversely affect safety or security. In addition, managers and supervisors are accessible to oversee work activities, including those of contractors or vendors, and they challenge work activities and work products that do not meet their standards.
- The organization maintains a safety conscious work environment in which personnel feel free to raise safety and security concerns without fear of retaliation. For example, claims of harassment, intimidation, retaliation, and discrimination are investigated consistent with the regulations regarding employee protection. If an instance of harassment, intimidation, retaliation, or discrimination for raising a safety or security concern is identified, corrective actions are taken in a timely manner.
- The organization ensures that issues potentially impacting safety or security are promptly identified, fully evaluated, and promptly addressed and corrected, commensurate with their significance.
- The organization ensures that the personnel, equipment, tools, procedures, and other resources needed to assure safety and security are available. For example, training is developed and implemented or accessed to ensure personnel competence. Procedures, work instructions, design documentation, drawings, databases, and other job aids and reference materials are complete, accurate, and up-to-date.
- The organization's decisions ensure that safety and security are maintained. For example, production, cost, and schedule goals are developed, communicated, and implemented in a manner which demonstrates that safety and security are overriding priorities.
- Roles, responsibilities, and authorities for safety and security are clearly defined and reinforced. For example, personnel understand their roles and responsibilities in maintaining safety and security. Programs, processes, procedures, and organizational interfaces are clearly defined and implemented as designed. Leaders at all levels of the organization consistently demonstrate that safety and security are overriding priorities.
- The organization maintains a continuous learning environment in which opportunities to improve safety and security are sought out and implemented. For example, individuals are encouraged to develop and maintain current their professional and technical knowledge, skills, and abilities and to remain knowledgeable of industry standards and innovative practices.

Personnel seek out and implement opportunities to improve safety and security performance.

Implementation of Policy

This policy statement describes areas important to safety culture, but it does not address how the nuclear industry, the Agreement States, and the NRC should establish and maintain a positive safety culture in their organizations. The nuclear industry, the Agreement States, and the NRC differ in their size and complexity, infrastructure, and organizational frameworks. Therefore, ~~a single approach for establishing and maintaining a positive safety culture is not possible.~~ Nevertheless, the Commission expects that nuclear safety and security issues receive the attention warranted by their significance, and all organizations consider and foster the safety culture characteristics (commensurate with the safety and security significance of activities and the nature and complexity of their organization and functions) in carrying out their day-to-day work activities and decisions.

Questions for Which NRC Is Seeking Input

1. The draft policy statement provides a description of areas important to safety culture, (i.e., safety culture characteristics). Are there any characteristics relevant to a particular type of licensee or certificate holder (if so, please specify which type) that do not appear to be addressed?
2. Are there safety culture characteristics as described in the draft policy statement that you believe do not contribute to safety culture and, therefore, should not be included?
3. Regarding the understanding of what the Commission means by a "positive safety culture," would it help to include the safety culture characteristics in the Statement of Policy section in the policy statement?
4. The draft policy statement includes the following definition of safety culture: "Safety culture is that assembly of characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors in organizations and individuals which establishes that as an overriding priority, nuclear safety and security issues receive the attention warranted by their significance." Does this definition need further clarification to be useful?
5. The draft policy statement states, "All licensees and certificate holders should consider and foster the safety culture characteristics (commensurate with the safety and security significance of activities and the nature and complexity of their organization and functions) in carrying out their day-to-day work activities and decisions."

Given the diversity among the licensees and certificate holders regulated by the NRC and the Agreement States, does this statement need further clarification?

Re: Consideration

6. How well does the draft safety culture policy statement enhance licensees' and certificate holders' understanding of the NRC's expectations that they maintain a safety culture that includes issues related to security?
7. In addition to issuing a safety culture policy statement, what might the NRC consider doing, or doing differently, to increase licensees' and certificate holders' attention to safety culture in the materials area?
8. How can the NRC better involve stakeholders to address safety culture, including security, for all NRC and Agreement State licensees and certificate holders?

To ensure efficient consideration of your comments, please identify the specific question numbers with your comments when applicable. When commenting, please exercise caution with regard to site-specific security related information. Comments will be made available to the public in their entirety. Personal information such as your name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address will not be removed from your submission.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 30th day of October 2009.
For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.
Cynthia A. Carpenter,
Director, Office of Enforcement.
[FR Doc. E9-26816 Filed 11-5-09; 8:45 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
[NRC-2009-0485]
Draft Safety Culture Policy Statement:
Request for Public Comments

This annotation clearly differentiates Nuclear Safety Culture from OSHA Safety Culture (ie, trips, spills & falls). You might be surprised at how many people will mis-interpret the NRC's intent. It would not hurt to throw in the word "Quality" to re-inforce the notion of a (Nuclear) Safety Culture going hand in hand with a (Nuclear) Quality Culture.

Sincerely, Robert A. Christiansen
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