
MANUAL CHAPTER 1601

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION PROTOCOL FOR DETERMINING THE
STATUS OF OFFSITE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOLLOWING A NATURAL
DISASTER, MALEVOLENT ACT, OR EXTENDED PLANT SHUTDOWN

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1601-01 PURPOSE

To provide procedures and guidelines for determining the status of offsite emergency preparedness (EP), and its impact on restart activities, following an extended plant shutdown, shutdown caused by electric grid blackouts, malevolent act, or natural disaster (e.g., hurricane, tornado, flood, storm, earthquake) in the vicinity of **commercial** power reactors.

1601-02 OBJECTIVES

02.01 Identify Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) groups or individuals responsible for monitoring licensee restart activities.

02.02 Identify Department of Homeland Security - Federal Emergency Management Agency (DHS-FEMA) contacts who have **oversight responsibilities and** information on **the status of** offsite conditions.

02.03 Establish communication links for coordinating information between the various organizations involved in plant restart, offsite recovery, or both.

02.04 Provide a checklist to facilitate tracking of **offsite EP** assessment activities **in support of plant restart following a natural disaster, malevolent act, or extended plant shutdown.**

1601-03 APPLICABILITY

03.01 This manual chapter is used when a natural disaster or malevolent act **occurs** at, or in the vicinity of, a **licensed operating nuclear** power plant **resulting in** damage or changes to **roads, buildings, communications, transportation resources or other** offsite infrastructure **that degrade the capabilities of offsite response organizations in the 10-mile plume emergency planning zone.** While the FEMA Disaster Initiated Review (DIR) Standard Operating Guide (SOG) will define the level of detail regarding changes to the emergency response infrastructure **that warrant use of the DIR procedures, these changes** may include physical changes as well as artificial changes (such as the erection of a "tent city").

In instances where substantial damage to the plant has **also** occurred, the plant restart activities should be coordinated using NRC Inspection Manual Chapter 0350, "Oversight of Reactor Facilities **In A Shutdown Condition Due To Significant Performance And/Or Operational Concerns**" or NRC Inspection Manual Chapter 0351, "Implementation of the Reactor Oversight Process at Reactor Facilities in an Extended Shutdown Condition for **Reasons Other Than Significant Performance Problems.**"

03.02 This manual chapter should be implemented consistent with the agreements of the Memorandum of Understanding between the NRC and DHS-FEMA. In this regard, if **an event occurs that** damages or changes the area around a licensed operating nuclear power plant **or the facility itself to an extent that DHS-FEMA seriously questions the adequacy of offsite EP response, DHS-FEMA Headquarters (Radiological Emergency Preparedness Branch) will inform the NRC promptly.** Likewise, the NRC Headquarters (NSIR / Division of Preparedness and Response) will inform DHS-FEMA Headquarters (REP Branch) promptly of any information it receives from licensees, its

inspectors, or others, that raises serious questions about the continued adequacy of offsite EP.

FEMA will conduct an initial review of damage or changes to offsite infrastructure and potential degradation to offsite EP capabilities in coordination with the applicable NRC Region(s), and appropriate State and local response organizations. During this initial review consideration will be given as to whether predetermined backup means are available or measures have been established that can adequately compensate for the impacted offsite capabilities/functions. Based on the results from the initial review, DHS-FEMA Headquarters (REP Branch), in consultation with FEMA Regional Office(s), will have the sole responsibility for determining the need to initiate a formal disaster initiated review (DIR). DHS-FEMA Headquarters (REP Branch) will communicate to NRC Headquarters, via email or fax, its decision on the need to conduct a formal DIR; this communication will include FEMA's characterization of the status of "Reasonable Assurance."

03.03 During an extended plant shutdown, in accordance with IMC-0350 or IMC-0351, the NRC will petition DHS-FEMA Headquarters to perform a review of offsite EP capabilities and issue a statement of Reasonable Assurance, certifying that the applicable State and local government emergency plans can and will be implemented in a manner to protect public health and safety in the event of a radiological incident at the specific plant emerging from an extended shutdown.

03.04 This manual chapter only applies when a reactor plant is shutdown and an offsite review of emergency preparedness is required. If the reactor plant is operating and there is damage to the offsite emergency preparedness infrastructure or any portion of offsite emergency preparedness is degraded, DHS-FEMA management, in consultation with State and applicable local governments and the NRC, will decide on the necessary actions to ensure adequate protection of public health and safety. This manual chapter may be used as a guide to support decision making regarding offsite preparedness under these conditions.

03.05 This manual chapter applies only to fixed nuclear power reactors. It does not apply to fuel cycle facilities.

1601-04 BACKGROUND

The NRC has primary responsibility for ensuring the adequacy of emergency preparedness for commercial nuclear power plants. Per the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DHS-FEMA and the NRC, contained in Appendix A to Part 44, Section 353 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), NRC defers to DHS-FEMA to assess the adequacy of offsite EP, via its DIR process, and to certify that the State and local government emergency plans can and will be implemented in a manner to ensure public health and safety in the event of a radiological emergency at an NRC licensed reactor facility. All agency decisions involving DHS-FEMA and NRC must take place between Headquarters offices. It is important to note that DHS-FEMA Headquarters management is the sole authority for determining the adequacy of offsite emergency plans and preparedness. The NRC will consider information provided by DHS-FEMA Headquarters and pertinent findings from FEMA's DIR in making decisions regarding the restart or continued operation of an affected operating nuclear power reactor. For this reason, direct communication and coordination between the two agencies is essential when events with the potential to impact the onsite or offsite emergency response infrastructure occur. These events include, but are not limited to,

hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, storms, fires, earthquakes, malevolent acts, **electric grid issues**, and extended plant shutdowns.

1601-05 RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITIES

The following individuals shall perform the listed actions. It is not necessary for communications to be restricted to those NRC personnel listed in this manual chapter. Reporting information to other NRC personnel should not delay the expected reporting in this manual chapter.

05.01 Designated Branch Chief for Operating Reactor Licensing, Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response (NSIR), Division of Preparedness and Response (DPR), Emergency Preparedness Directorate (EPD).

- a. Act as the lead **EP** technical point of contact **with DHS-FEMA Headquarters** for the activities of this manual chapter, and ensure completion of all activities using the checklist in Appendix 1 **related to natural disasters or malevolent acts impacting offsite EP**.
- b. **Coordinate communications with the DHS-FEMA REP Branch Chief and the applicable NRC Regional State Liaison Officer (RSLO) regarding FEMA's assessment of offsite EP capabilities, decision to perform a DIR, and expectations for issuance of FEMA's findings.**
 1. **Obtain from the DHS-FEMA REP Branch Chief, as soon as it is available, the results of FEMA's initial review regarding the status of offsite EP, including FEMA's characterization of the status of "Reasonable Assurance," and whether a DIR is being initiated. This may be communicated verbally followed by written documentation via email or fax.**
 2. **If DHS-FEMA Headquarters concludes that a DIR is necessary to determine if offsite EP is still adequate, obtain a schedule for conduct of the review.**
 3. **Obtain NRC Regional support for the DIR Team, through the appropriate Regional State Liaison Officer and regional DRS EP Branch Chief.**
 4. **Obtain from FEMA verbal status reports and, per the MOU, interim written reports of its findings, as appropriate, and provide information to FEMA on plant restart activities.**
- c. Participate as the lead **EP** technical contact during the restart counterpart conference call (RCCC), as defined in section 06.02.
- d. Ensure that the **designated Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR) Project Manager for the affected licensee and NSIR management** are informed of any new developments **regarding FEMA's assessment of offsite EP capabilities, decision to perform a DIR, and expectations for issuance of FEMA's findings.**
- e. Obtain from the **DHS-FEMA REP Branch Chief**, as soon as it is available, the results of FEMA's **DIR** regarding the status of offsite **EP** and whether it is adequate to support plant restart. As soon as this information is received,

provide it to the applicable NRR Project Manager, RSLO, and NSIR management.

DHS-FEMA Headquarters may provide preliminary DIR results verbally or via e-mail or fax, prior to the issuance of a formal written statement of findings per the MOU.

- f. If it appears that FEMA's DIR will not be complete in time to support the licensee's proposed restart schedule, or if the information received from DHS-FEMA is that the state of offsite EP is not adequate to support plant restart on the schedule proposed by the licensee, conduct the following:
 1. Obtain a thorough understanding of the significance of the offsite EP issues in question, including:
 - (a) What compensatory measures, if any, are (or could be) available to offset the EP program elements that are not fully functional; and
 - (b) Projected date on which the emergency planning zone (EPZ) infrastructure will be fully functional or when adequate compensatory measures will be in place.
 2. Discuss these issues with NSIR management, and in coordination with the NRR Project Manager, with the NRR Executive Team and senior regional management to determine follow-up actions with the licensee, DHS-FEMA, and others, as appropriate. Contact the HOO to arrange a conference bridge, in order to facilitate timely communication with appropriate parties, or conduct as part of periodic RCCC.
- g. If it appears that communications between the various offsite response organizations are preventing the completion of a timely assessment regarding the status of offsite EP, offer the services of NRC telecommunications resources to the parties so that an effective conference call to exchange information can be held. Examples of resources to consider in accomplishing this conference include the following:
 1. NRC Headquarters Operations Center conference system;
 2. Regional Office bridge network; and
 3. Resident inspector and regional satellite telephone equipment.

05.02 NRR Deputy Division Directors for the Affected Sites.

- a. Participate in the RCCC.
- b. Communicate important developments in the restart process and the DIR process with the NRR Executive Team.

05.03 NRR Project Managers for the Affected Sites.

- a. Organize and facilitate the RCCC (as defined in section 06.02).

- b. Keep the **NSIR Branch** Chief informed of any new developments **regarding proposed plant restart schedules and activities**.
- c. Obtain from the **NSIR Branch** Chief, as soon as it is available, the results of DHS-FEMA's **DIR** and whether it is adequate to support plant restart or continued operation. As soon as this information is received, provide it to the NRR Executive Team and regional **DRP Branch Chief** for the affected site.

05.04 Regional State Liaison Officers (RSLOs) and/or NRC Regional Assistance Committee (RAC) Representatives.

- a. **Interface with respective FEMA Regional RAC Chair, or REP staff as appropriate, to support FEMA's initial review of offsite EP capabilities and infrastructure, and their determination as to whether a DIR is warranted.**

Note: For natural disaster with advance notice (i.e., hurricane), consider having pre-planning meetings or conference calls with FEMA Region and affected State and local response organizations, as warranted, to discuss post-event disaster review coordination and identification of potential compensatory measures.

- b. Participate in the FEMA-led **DIR**, as necessary and appropriate to the representative's skills.

Note: Consider obtaining a portable satellite telephone unit from the Regional Emergency Response Coordinator to facilitate the communication responsibilities of this paragraph in the event of degraded communication infrastructure in the affected area.

- c. Obtain information regarding important developments in the onsite recovery and restart process to support the FEMA-led **DIR**.
- d. **Provide periodic updates to Regional management and EPD ORL Branch Chief on activities associated with FEMA's review of offsite EP capabilities and infrastructure.**

05.05 Regional Division of Reactor Projects (DRP) Branch Chiefs.

- a. Participate in the RCCC, as necessary.
- b. Communicate important developments in the restart process to senior regional management **in coordination with the RSLO**.
- c. Establish a dialogue with licensee management to determine their schedule for reactor restart, or the status of continued operations and assessments of risks involved. Inform them whether any offsite EP assessments are scheduled, or ongoing, so that licensee management may factor these into their plans.
- d. **Apprise NSIR Branch Chief of projected plant restart schedule, activities, and any changes that may occur.**

Communications of estimated plant restart activities may be provided verbally to DHS-FEMA Headquarters initially, but per MOU must be provided in writing as soon as practicable through the NSIR Branch Chief.

05.06 Regional Division of Reactor Safety (DRS) EP Branch Chiefs.

- a. Participate in the RCCC.
- b. Communicate status of emergency preparedness assessment activities with senior regional management and the **NSIR Branch** Chief.
- c. Establish a dialogue with licensee EP management to determine the status of ongoing actions to restore EP infrastructure.
- d. Once informed by the **NSIR Branch** Chief of DHS-FEMA's **DIR** results, provide this information to senior regional management. (Note: per MOU, only DHS-FEMA Headquarters can certify the adequacy of offsite emergency plans and preparedness.)

05.07 Senior Resident Inspectors.

- a. Participate in the RCCC, as necessary.
- b. Communicate important developments in the restart process and the assessment of onsite EP elements that link to offsite **EP** and emergency sirens (if maintained by the licensee) with the regional **DRP Branch** Chief.
- c. The following information should be relayed as soon as it is known:
 1. Licensee's expected commencement of heatup and/or rod withdrawal, if the reactor is shut down; **and**
 2. General condition of the EP infrastructure (see communications protocol identified in the caution statement that follows).
 - (a) The general condition may be determined from discussions with licensee personnel. (Obtaining this information does not require an independent inspection to verify the status.)

NOTE: It is not appropriate for **NRC Staff** to contact offsite agencies to determine this information. That responsibility rests with the appropriate FEMA regional office. The Regional State Liaison Officer is the primary NRC staff member who is responsible for interface with FEMA at the regional/local level. All decisions concerning the adequacy of offsite EP will be based on DHS-FEMA's **DIR**.

- (b) Particular effort should be made to determine the status of the following (gathered from the licensee and the **Senior Resident Inspector's** insights):
 - (1) Communication circuits between the licensee and the offsite authorities;
 - (2) Licensee's emergency response facilities;

- (3) Licensee's ability to staff the required emergency response organization positions and critical plant personnel;
- (4) Environmental monitoring;
- (5) Meteorological towers;
- (6) Evacuation routes to and from the plant site;
- (7) Emergency sirens, if maintained by the licensee; and
- (8) Structures, systems, and components needed for Emergency Action Level classifications.

05.08 NRC Operations Center - Headquarters Operations Officer (HOO) and Headquarters Emergency Response Officer (HERO).

- a. Relay any incoming information from any source (i.e., licensee, NRC employee, other Federal agency employee) that may affect the restart process or continued plant operation following a shut down caused by a natural disaster or malevolent act, to the NSIR Branch Chief.
- b. Help with coordination, including the setting up of conference bridges, as requested, to facilitate timely communication with appropriate NRC Headquarters and Regional management.

05.09 NRR Executive Team (Office Director, Deputy Director, Division Directors).

- a. Participate in the restart decision (if applicable), along with NSIR senior management and senior regional management.
- b. Evaluate the need for the NRC to issue an order or confirmatory action letter to the licensee to ensure that the restart does not occur under degraded offsite conditions, and the plant is maintained in a condition of minimal risk.
- c. Determine whether the affected plant is subject to the restart provisions of NRC Inspection Manual Chapter 0350, "Oversight of Reactor Facilities In A Shutdown Condition Due To Significant Performance And/Or Operational Concerns" or NRC Inspection Manual Chapter 0351, "Implementation of the Reactor Oversight Process at Reactor Facilities in an Extended Shutdown Condition for Reasons Other Than Significant Performance Problems."

05.10 NSIR Senior Management (Office Director, Deputy Director, Division Directors).

Participate in any restart decision, along with the NRR Executive Team and senior regional management, as appropriate.

05.11 Senior Regional Management (Regional Administrator, Deputy Regional Administrator, Division Directors).

- a. Participate in the restart decision, along with NSIR senior management and the NRR Executive Team.

- b. Evaluate the need for the NRC to issue an order or confirmatory action letter to the licensee to ensure that the restart does not occur under degraded offsite conditions, and the plant is maintained in a condition of minimal risk.
- c. Determine whether the affected plant is subject to the restart provisions of **NRC Inspection Manual Chapter 0350, "Oversight of Reactor Facilities In A Shutdown Condition Due To Significant Performance And/Or Operational Concerns"** or **NRC Inspection Manual Chapter 0351, "Implementation of the Reactor Oversight Process at Reactor Facilities in an Extended Shutdown Condition for Reasons Other Than Significant Performance Problems."**
- d. The **NRC Region** shall inform the licensee of the restart decision.

1601-06 REQUIREMENTS

06.01 The restart **authorization** decision, if applicable, will be made jointly by the NRR Executive Team, NSIR senior management, and Regional Administrator. The Regional Administrator will inform the licensee of the restart decision.

06.02 The **RCCC is an internal NRC** conference call **and** is the primary means for information sharing during the restart assessment process. The NRR Project Manager for the affected site will **conduct** a conference **call at least daily while the actions of this manual chapter are ongoing** and will notify all stakeholders (identified in this manual chapter) of the schedule and logistics for the call. During the call, the **NSIR Branch Chief** will lead **the** discussion of new and updated information **on FEMA's DIR activities and will subsequently** ensure that DHS-FEMA **Headquarters** is notified of any relevant information **resulting from the RCCC**.

06.03 NRC parties **should focus on** informative and timely communications. It is not necessary to continuously maintain open circuits with other offices or agencies; important information and developments should be relayed to designated contacts as quickly as possible. The NRR Executive Team, NSIR senior management, and the Regional Administrator need to be reliably informed **via the RCCCs** so that they can communicate with the licensee for a safe restart.

Note: Prompt communication of findings, the Statement of Reasonable Assurance, **and restart decisions are** of the utmost importance and may necessitate late night conference calls.

06.04 If, at any time, NRC staff receives new or updated information, it should be passed on to the **NSIR Branch Chief**. The **NSIR Branch Chief**, in consultation with the NRR Project Manager for the affected site, shall pass that information on to the appropriate stakeholders; or, if applicable, the NRR Project Manager will schedule a RCCC to allow dissemination of the information.

06.05 If the reaffirmation of adequate offsite emergency preparedness is not forthcoming before the licensee plans to heat up the plant or restart the reactor, then inform, **via the RCCCs**, the NRR Executive Team, NSIR senior management, and the Regional Administrator of this fact as soon as possible. These officials will evaluate the need for the NRC to issue an order, or confirmatory action letter to the licensee. This will ensure that the restart does not occur under degraded offsite conditions, and the plant is maintained in a condition of minimal risk. These senior officials will also determine whether the affected plant is subject to the restart provisions of **NRC Inspection Manual Chapter 0350, "Oversight of Reactor Facilities In A Shutdown**

Condition Due To Significant Performance And/Or Operational Concerns" or NRC Inspection Manual Chapter 0351, "Implementation of the Reactor Oversight Process at Reactor Facilities in an Extended Shutdown Condition for Reasons Other Than Significant Performance Problems."

06.06 NRC shall strive to ensure that all decisions regarding emergency preparedness reviews are carried out consistently across regional boundaries, both during one initiating event and from one event to another. Additionally, if an emergency preparedness assessment is necessary for more than one plant site simultaneously, the NRC should prioritize reviews per this manual chapter on situational information.

1601-07 REFERENCES

NRC Inspection Manual Chapter 0350, "Oversight of Reactor Facilities In A Shutdown Condition Due To Significant Performance And/Or Operational Concerns."

NRC Inspection Manual Chapter 0351, "Implementation of the Reactor Oversight Process at Reactor Facilities in an Extended Shutdown Condition for Reasons Other Than Significant Performance Problems."

Memorandum of Understanding Between Federal Emergency Management Agency and Nuclear Regulatory Commission (Appendix A to 44 CFR 353)

FEMA Standard Operating Guide (SOG) "Disaster Initiated Review"

END

Appendix A – Emergency Preparedness Restart Status Checklist

Attachment 1 – Revision History for IMC 1601

APPENDIX A
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS RESTART STATUS CHECKLIST

Initiating Action:

1. After consulting with DHS-FEMA, if any of the following events affect the 10-mile emergency planning zone surrounding a power reactor, this checklist should be considered: hurricanes, tornados, flooding, high winds, large fires, blizzards, ice storms, seismic activity, malevolent acts, **electric grid blackouts**, or any other events that challenge offsite emergency preparedness capability. Also, for extended plant shutdowns, this checklist should be considered (see section 03.03).
2. If the licensee **declares** any of **its Emergency Classes specified in the licensee's approved Emergency Plan as a result of** any of these events, this checklist must be implemented.
3. Contact from DHS-FEMA regarding the status of offsite preparedness may also warrant implementation of this checklist.

This checklist should be initiated immediately following termination of an event classified under the licensee's emergency plan or when informed by FEMA that a DIR is being considered to assess impact on offsite infrastructure and EP capabilities.

Notes:

***ALL agency decisions involving DHS-FEMA and the NRC must take place between Headquarters offices.

***Written reports may be necessary per the MOU to document agency reports and decisions, however, verbal communication is appropriate and acceptable for all agency interactions.

Required Action	Responsible Party	Date Completed
1. Determine whether this checklist shall be implemented for a given event.	NSIR EPD	
2. Refer to IMC 1601 for complete list of communications requirements.	All NRC stakeholders	
3. Make contact with the relevant NRC RSLO to discuss offsite preparedness . Notify the NRR Project Manager for the affected sites.	NSIR EPD	
4. Initiate dialogue with licensee to determine current plant status, restart plan (if applicable), and status of licensee communications with DHS-FEMA regarding offsite EP (if known). Report results to NSIR EPD.	NRC Region / DRS and Resident Inspectors	
5. Initiate dialogue with DHS-FEMA HQ / REP to inform them of current status/restart plan for affected plant (estimated restart date/time, including heatup if the reactor is in cold shutdown), and to discuss offsite EP issues that the NRC and DHS-FEMA are aware of.	NSIR EPD	

Continuous Actions		
If immediate agency action is required (i.e., orders, conference calls, ensuring compensatory measures are taken) before formal review activities can be completed, follow guidance in sections 03.04 and 05.01(g).	All NRC stakeholders	
Conduct restart counterpart conference calls (RCCC), as needed (section 06.02).	NSIR EPD, NRR PM , and all stakeholders	
Communicate important highlights from the RCCC to DHS-FEMA HQ / REP.	NSIR EPD	
Participate in DHS-FEMA review of offsite preparedness, as necessary. Maintain awareness of plant situation, including onsite and offsite preparedness (dialogue with State/local officials regarding conditions around the plant and evacuation routes) and continuously provide that information to the NRC Region and NSIR EPD .	Regional State Liaison Officers Regional EP Branch Chief	
Required Action	Responsible Party	Date Completed
6. Obtain from DHS-FEMA HQ the assessment regarding the need for a review of offsite EP adequacy (including a schedule for the review).	NSIR EPD	
7. Conduct an RCCC to inform NRC stakeholders of DHS-FEMA's Disaster Initiated Review schedule. However, If DHS-FEMA determines no review is necessary, cease checklist activities.	NSIR EPD, NRR PM , and all stakeholders	
8. Obtain from DHS-FEMA the interim reports of its findings regarding offsite preparedness.	NSIR EPD	
9. Conduct an RCCC to inform NRC stakeholders of the results of DHS-FEMA's offsite preparedness review.	NSIR EPD, NRR DLPM, and all stakeholders	
10. NRC considers DHS-FEMA HQ input and review findings, in addition to status of onsite preparedness, to determine appropriate action (i.e., restart, order, CAL).	NRR Executive Team / NSIR senior management / Regional Administrator	

<p>11. NRC informs DHS-FEMA HQ of the NRC's decision and, if appropriate, licensee schedule for restart of the affected reactor(s). NRC updates DHS-FEMA HQ regarding changes, as necessary.</p> <p>If plant is not permitted to restart due to EP issues, return to step 10. Continue RCCCs and information exchanges until issues are resolved.</p>	NSIR EPD	
<p>12. NRC Region informs licensee of restart decision.</p>	Region	
<p><i>Plant Restart – Assessment Complete</i></p>		

Attachment 1 – Revision History for IMC 1601

Commitment Tracking Number	Issue Date	Description of Change	Training Needed	Training Completion Date	Comment Resolution Accession Number
N/A	6/24/03	N/A			
N/A	07/07/05	revised to improve internal and external communication and coordination when determining the status of offsite emergency preparedness in support of plant restart. This manual chapter's scope has been expanded to not only include natural disasters, but also malevolent acts or extended plant shutdowns. It also includes a new Appendix A checklist for tracking completion of manual chapter	N/A	N/A	N/A

		activities. IMC 1601 is also being revised to reflect the organizational change of emergency preparedness staff from NRR to NSIR.			
N/A	09/16/11 CN 11-017	Editorial Changes. Updated to maintain alignment with FEMA DIR SOP and improve coordination and communication	None	N/A	ML110250098