

NRC INSPECTION MANUAL

CAEB

MANUAL CHAPTER 2505P

PERIODIC ASSESSMENT OF
CONSTRUCTION INSPECTION PROGRAM RESULTS - PILOT

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EXHIBITS:

EXHIBIT 1	Construction Inspection Process Activities
EXHIBIT 2	Construction Action Matrix

Non-publicly available EXHIBITS available on the internal cROP website:

EXHIBIT 3	Sample Mid-cycle Plant Performance Summary
EXHIBIT 4	Sample of End-of-Cycle Plant Performance Summary
EXHIBIT 5	Sample Mid-Cycle Assessment Letter
EXHIBIT 6	Sample End-of-Cycle Assessment Letter
EXHIBIT 7	Sample Assessment Followup Letter
EXHIBIT 8	Sample Construction Experience Input to Plant Performance Summary
EXHIBIT 9	Sample Allegations Input to Plant Performance Summary
EXHIBIT 10	Sample Licensing Input to Plant Performance Summary

ATTACHMENT:

1. Acronyms
2. Revision History for IMC 2505P

2505P-01 PURPOSE

This Inspection Manual Chapter (IMC) describes the Construction Reactor Oversight Process (cROP) assessment program for commercial nuclear power plants applied for and/or licensed under 10 CFR Part 50 (Part 50), "Domestic Licensing of Production and Utilization Facilities," and 10 CFR Part 52 (Part 52), "Licenses, Certifications, and Approvals for Nuclear Power Plants," with the exception of Watts Bar Unit 2 (WB2) construction activities (WB2 assessment program is implemented per the guidance in IMC 2517, "Watts Bar Unit 2 Construction Inspection Program").

2505P-02 OBJECTIVES

02.01 To arrive at an objective assessment of a licensee's effectiveness in assuring construction quality through the evaluation of the inspection history of selected construction activities, other inspection activities (e.g., IP 35007, "Quality Assurance Program Implementation during Construction"), enforcement history, allegations, and safety culture.

02.02 To provide guidance for making timely and predictable decisions regarding appropriate agency actions used to oversee, inspect, and assess licensee performance.

02.03 To provide a method for informing licensees and the public on the results of NRC's assessment of licensee performance.

2505P-03 APPLICABILITY

In "Staff Requirements – SECY-10-0140 – Options For Revising The Construction Reactor Oversight Process Assessment Program," March 21, 2011, the Commission directed the staff to develop a construction assessment program that includes a regulatory framework, the use of a construction significance determination process (SDP) to determine the significance of findings identified during the construction inspection program (CIP), and the use of a construction action matrix (CAM) to determine the appropriate NRC response to findings. The staff has developed a new construction assessment program as directed and beginning on January 1, 2012, the staff plans to pilot the new construction assessment program for 12 months at Vogtle Units 3 and 4 and at any other facility licensed under 10 CFR Part 52 at which there are substantial construction activities occurring. The cROP pilot will not be conducted to review construction activities at Watts Bar Unit 2 but will apply to any other facility licensed under 10 CFR Part 50 at which there are substantial construction activities occurring. This IMC contains guidance for use by the staff during the assessment of construction activities at the pilot plants.

2505P-04 DEFINITIONS

Applicable definitions are found in Inspection Manual Chapter 2506, "Construction

2505P-05 RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITIES

05.01 Executive Director for Operations (EDO).

- a. Oversees the activities described in this IMC.
- b. Approves all deviations from the CAM.
- c. Informs the Commission of all approved deviations from the CAM.

05.02 Director, Office of New Reactors (NRO).

- a. Provides overall program direction for the reactor construction assessment program.
- b. Assesses the effectiveness, uniformity, and completeness of implementation of the construction assessment program.
- c. Ensures that the public is informed of the results of the construction assessment program, as appropriate.

05.03 Deputy Regional Administrator for Construction (DRAC).

- a. Provides program direction for management and implementation of the construction assessments conducted by the Region II Center for Construction Inspection (CCI).
- b. Ensures that the CCI staff includes adequate numbers of inspectors in the various disciplines necessary to carry out the construction assessment program as described in this IMC.
- c. Ensures that licensees and the public are informed of the results of the construction assessment program as appropriate.
- d. Determines that a licensee’s corrective action program has been adequately developed and implemented.

05.04 Director, Office of Public Affairs.

Issues press releases following the completion of the mid-cycle and end-of-cycle reviews.

05.05 Director, Division of Construction Inspection and Operational Programs (DCIP), NRO.

- a. Develops construction assessment program guidance.
- b. Collects feedback from CCI and assesses execution of the construction assessment program to ensure consistent application.
- c. Recommends, develops, and implements improvements to the construction assessment program.
- d. Concurs on proposals by CCI to extend a greater-than-green finding beyond that allowed by subsection 06.01 of this IMC.
- e. Concurs on the increased targeted inspection plan for plants in the Degraded Cornerstone, Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone, and Unacceptable Performance columns of the CAM.

05.06 Director, Division of Construction Projects (CCI/DCP).

- a. Chairs the mid-cycle and end-of-cycle meetings.
- b. Approves proposals to re-allocate resources as a result of licensee performance issues.

05.07 Branch Chiefs, CCI/DCP and DCI.

- a. Conducts continuous and quarterly assessment reviews.
- b. Approves proposals to re-allocate resources for other than licensee performance issues such as allegations and events.

05.08 CCI Project Inspection Staff.

- a. Administers and implements the construction inspection program and issues inspection reports.
- b. Provides NRO with the status of inspections related to specific ITAAC.
- c. Acts as the licensee's primary NRC contact for the construction inspection program.
- d. Coordinates the development of, and revision to, the site inspection plan.
- e. Integrates all of the inspection violations and other inputs to develop an overall assessment of licensee performance.

2505P-06 ASSESSMENT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

06.01 Program Overview. The NRC's construction assessment program is

implemented at each plant that is under construction to allow for the NRC to arrive at objective conclusions about a licensee's effectiveness in assuring construction quality, provide for predictable responses to performance issues, and to clearly communicate performance assessment results to the public. In implementing the construction assessment program (Exhibit 1), the NRC evaluates the inspection history of selected construction activities and programs, enforcement history, allegations, and safety culture to arrive at an integrated assessment of licensee performance. The NRC determines the appropriate agency response to performance issues using the guidance provided in the CAM (Exhibit 2). The NRC assessment of applicant/licensee performance and associated response are then communicated to the public. Follow-up agency actions, as applicable, are conducted to ensure that the corrective actions designed to address performance weaknesses were effective.

06.02 Period of Review. Licensee performance at each unit is reviewed over a 12-month period through the reactor construction assessment program. Included in the program are Performance Reviews as detailed in Section 10, Program Reviews as detailed in Section 11, and Public Stakeholder Involvement as detailed in Section 12.

06.03 Use of Inspection Findings. The significance of inspection findings is determined in accordance with the guidance provided in IMC 2519P, "Construction Significance Determination Process - Pilot." A greater-than-green finding will only be considered in the assessment program after the final determination of significance is made through the SDP and the licensee has been informed of the decision. A finding can apply to all units under construction at a particular site if it is generic in nature (e.g., corrective action program findings) or if the finding occurred at each of the units (e.g., inadequate design change applied to multiple units). The finding will be dated back to the end of the inspection period during which it was identified.

Example: A preliminary white inspection finding identified in the second calendar year (CY) quarter whose final safety significance was determined to be white (low to moderate safety significance) during the third CY quarter, would be considered a white finding in CY quarters 2 and 3.

For the first quarterly assessment of licensee performance, all findings identified since the commencement of inspections per IMC 2502, "Construction Inspection Program: Pre Combined License (Pre-COL) Phase," IMC 2503, "Construction Inspection Program: Inspections of Inspections, Tests, Analyses, and Acceptance Criteria (ITAAC) Related Work" and IMC 2504, "Construction Inspection Program Inspection of Construction and Operational Programs," will be considered to determine the appropriate column of the CAM that applies to the licensee's performance. Each subsequent review will only consider inspection findings identified in the previous two quarters unless CCI has justification to keep the finding open.

Inspection findings may be held open more than two quarters if the corresponding supplemental inspection has not been conducted or reveals substantive inadequacies in the licensee's (1) evaluation of the root causes of the inspection finding, (2) determination of the extent of the performance problems, or (3) actions taken or planned to correct the issue. In this case, additional agency action, including additional

enforcement actions or an expansion of the supplemental inspection procedure, may be needed to independently acquire the necessary information to satisfy the inspection requirements.

In these situations, the original performance issue will remain open and will not be removed from consideration in the assessment program until the inadequacies identified in the supplemental inspection are adequately addressed and corrected, or a supplemental inspection has been completed successfully. In the associated inspection report, CCI must convey the specific weaknesses that the applicant/licensee needs to address in order to remove this finding from consideration in the assessment program. The correspondence to the applicant/licensee describing the extension of an inspection finding in the assessment process beyond the normal two quarters due to a significant weakness in the licensee's evaluation of the performance issue must be authorized by the appropriate CCI Division Director after consulting with the Deputy Director, NRO/DCIP.

If inspection findings are extended beyond the original two quarters, the CAM column can be changed upon successful completion of the supplemental inspection and issuance of the associated inspection report (or other agency action), and an assessment follow-up letter noting the change in column (assessment follow-up letters are only required for reduction in a CAM column when held-open findings are being closed out). However, the findings will still be considered (counted towards future column determination) in the CAM for the remainder of the quarter.

06.04 Use of Unresolved Items (URIs). URIs should be dispositioned in accordance with IMC 0613P, "Documenting 10 CFR Part 52 Construction Inspections - Pilot." URIs are not considered in the assessment of licensee performance.

06.05 Use of Traditional Enforcement Outcomes. The NRC's enforcement policy may also apply to violations that involve willfulness (including discrimination) that the SDP process cannot evaluate for safety significance. If applicable, the underlying technical issue should be evaluated separately using the SDP and the results considered in the assessment program. The violations not associated with an SDP finding should be considered when determining (1) the range of agency actions within the appropriate column of the CAM, (2) whether a construction substantive cross-cutting issue exists in the SCWE area, and (3) the need for more detailed follow up in response to escalated enforcement actions or a series of violations in one of the traditional enforcement areas of willfulness, impeding the regulatory process, or actual consequences.

06.06 Findings Under Appeal. The process by which a licensee may appeal the staff's final significance determination of an inspection finding documented in an NRC inspection report or final significance determination letter is described in IMC 2519P, Attachment 2, "Process for Appealing NRC Characterization of Inspection Findings." If a licensee chooses to appeal the significance determination of a finding, that finding is counted in the CAM consistent with the original significance determination until such a time as the staff notifies the licensee in writing of a change in final significance determination.

2505P-07 CONSTRUCTION ACTION MATRIX

07.01 Description of the CAM. The CAM (Exhibit 2) identifies the range of NRC and licensee actions and the appropriate level of communication for different levels of licensee performance. The CAM describes a graded approach in addressing performance issues and was developed with the philosophy that, within a certain level of safety performance (e.g., the licensee response band), licensees would address their performance issues without additional NRC engagement beyond the baseline inspection program as defined in IMC 2506. Agency action beyond the baseline inspection program will normally occur only if assessment input thresholds are exceeded.

The following terms are used throughout the discussion of the CAM.

- a. Regulatory Performance Meetings. Regulatory performance meetings are held between licensees and the agency to discuss corrective actions associated with greater-than-green inspection findings. The purpose of the meeting is to provide a forum in which to develop a shared understanding of the performance issues, underlying causes, and planned licensee actions for each greater-than-green assessment input.

These meetings may take place during periodic inspection exit meetings between the agency and the licensee, a periodic NRC management visit, conference calls, or public meetings after completion of the supplemental inspection. These meetings are documented in either an inspection report or a public meeting summary, as appropriate.

- b. Licensee Action. Anticipated licensee actions in response to overall performance are identified for each column of the CAM. If these actions are not being taken by the licensee then the agency may consider expanding the scope of the applicable supplemental inspection to appropriately address the area(s) of concern. This would not be considered a deviation from the CAM in accordance with Section 07.03 of this IMC.
- c. NRC Inspection. The range of NRC inspection activities to be conducted in response to licensee performance is identified for each column of the CAM.
- d. Regulatory Actions. The range of actions that may be taken by the agency in response to licensee performance identified for each column of the CAM.
- e. Communication. Communication between the licensee and the NRC is based on a graded approach. Normally, declining licensee performance will result in higher levels of agency management reviewing and signing the assessment letters and conducting the annual public meeting.

07.02 Expected Responses for Performance in Each CAM Column. The CAM lists expected NRC and licensee actions based on the inputs to the assessment process. Actions are graded such that the agency becomes more engaged as licensee

performance declines. Listed below are the ranges of expected NRC and licensee actions for each column of the CAM:

a. Licensee Response Column (Column 1).

1. All assessment inputs are green.
2. The licensee will receive the complete risk-informed baseline inspection program and any identified deficiencies will be addressed through the licensee's corrective action program (see Section 2505P-13 of this IMC regarding NRC verification that the licensee has implemented an adequate corrective action program).

b. Regulatory Response Column (Column 2).

1. Assessment inputs result in no more than one white input in any cornerstone and no more than two white inputs in any strategic performance area.
2. The licensee is expected to place the identified deficiencies in its corrective action program and perform an evaluation of the root and contributing causes.
3. The licensee's evaluation will be reviewed using IP 90001, "Construction Regulatory Response Column Inspections."
4. Following completion of the inspection, the branch chief or division director should discuss the performance deficiencies and the licensee's proposed corrective actions with the licensee. The regulatory performance meeting will normally occur at an inspection exit meeting, at a periodic NRC management visit, or a conference call between the licensee and the appropriate branch chief (or division director).

c. Degraded Cornerstone Column (Column 3).

1. Assessment inputs result in a degraded cornerstone (two or more white inputs or one yellow input in any cornerstone) or three white inputs to any strategic performance area.
2. The licensee is expected to place the identified deficiencies in its corrective action program and perform an evaluation of the root and contributing causes for both the individual and the collective issues. This evaluation should also determine whether deficient safety culture components caused or significantly contributed to the risk-significant performance issues. If so, those safety culture deficiencies should be entered into the plant's corrective action program.
3. The licensee's evaluation will be reviewed using IP 90002, "Construction

Degraded Cornerstone Column Inspections.” CCI will also conduct an independent assessment of the extent of condition.

Additionally, the NRC may request that the licensee complete an independent assessment of safety culture, if the NRC identified through the IP 90002 inspection and the licensee did not recognize that one or more safety culture component deficiencies caused or significantly contributed to the risk-significant performance issues.

The staff will use IP 40100, “Independent Safety Culture Assessment Follow-up,” to perform follow-up when the NRC requests the licensee to perform an independent safety culture assessment. The focus of the follow-up effort will be to confirm that the licensee is appropriately dealing with the weaknesses identified by their safety culture assessment. Regional staff should contact the Chief, Construction Assessment, Enforcement, and Allegations Branch, NRO/DCIP for assistance and guidance.

4. Following completion of the inspection, the DRAC (or designee) should discuss the performance deficiencies and the licensee’s proposed corrective actions with the licensee. The regulatory performance meeting will normally consist of a public meeting between the licensee and the DRAC (or designee).
 5. Any licensee remaining in the Degraded Cornerstone Column for one year or more may be invited to meet with the Commission to discuss performance issues and their plan for addressing those issues.
- d. Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone Column (Column 4).
1. Assessment inputs result in a repetitive degraded cornerstone; multiple degraded cornerstones, multiple yellow inputs, or a red input.
 2. The licensee is expected to place the identified deficiencies in its corrective action program and perform an evaluation of the root and contributing causes for both the individual and the collective issues. This evaluation may consist of a third party assessment. The licensee is also expected to perform a third-party assessment of their safety culture.
 3. IP 90003, “Construction Repetitive Degraded Cornerstones/Multiple Degraded Cornerstone Inspections,” will be performed to review the breadth and depth of the performance deficiencies, assess the licensee’s evaluation of their safety culture, and independently perform a graded assessment of the licensee’s safety culture. A decision not to independently perform an assessment of the licensee’s safety culture would be a deviation from the CAM and would have to be approved in accordance with Section 07.03. However, the staff can use the results from a licensee’s third party safety culture assessment and the licensee’s

root cause evaluation to satisfy the inspection requirements if the staff has completed a validation of the third party assessment methodology and assessment effort and root cause evaluation. This situation would not be a deviation to the CAM. The supplemental inspection plan must be approved by the appropriate regional division director with concurrence of the Deputy Director, NRO/DCIP.

4. Following the completion of the inspection, the EDO or his designee, in conjunction with the Region II Administrator and the Director, NRO, will decide whether additional agency actions are warranted. At a minimum, Region II will issue a Confirmatory Action Letter (CAL) to document the licensee's commitments, as discussed in their performance improvement plan, and any other written or verbal commitments. The CAL should explicitly identify licensee actions that, when effectively implemented and validated by the NRC, will provide the necessary bases to transition the plant out of the Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone Column when an assessment follow-up letter is issued. These actions need to be as clear and objective as possible.

Other actions will also be considered including performing additional supplemental inspections, issuing a demand for information or an order; up to and including the suspension of the utility's COL. The regional administrator should document the results of the staff's decision in a letter to the licensee. These regulatory actions may also be considered prior to the completion of IP 90003, if warranted. The regulatory performance meeting will normally consist of a public meeting between the licensee and the EDO/Deputy EDO (or designee).

Note: Other than the CAL, the regulatory actions listed in this column of the CAM are not mandatory. However, Region II should consider each of these regulatory actions when significant new information about licensee performance becomes available.

Due to the depth and/or breadth of performance issues reflected by a plant being in the Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone column of the CAM, it is prudent to ensure that actual performance improvements have been made prior to closing out the inspection findings and exiting the Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone Column of the CAM.

Region II should consider the following as indicative of actual performance improvements:

- (a) New plant issues or violations do not reveal similar significant performance weaknesses;
- (b) The licensee's performance improvement program has demonstrated sustained improvement;

- (c) NRC construction supplemental inspections show significant licensee progress in the principal areas of weakness;
 - (d) There were no issues that led the NRC to take additional regulatory actions beyond those already taken due to the licensee being in the Unacceptable Performance column of the CAM. Additionally, the licensee has made significant progress on any regulatory actions that were imposed (e.g., CALs, orders, 10 CFR 50.54(f) letters) because of the performance deficiencies that led to the Unacceptable Performance column designation.
5. After the original findings have been closed out, and an assessment follow-up letter is issued, the licensee will return to the CAM column that is represented by the other outstanding greater-than-green inspection findings.

Additionally, for a period of up to one year after the initial findings have been closed out, CCI may use actions that are consistent with the Degraded Cornerstone or Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone Column of the CAM in order to ensure the appropriate level of agency oversight of licensee improvement initiatives.

These actions, which do not constitute a deviation from the CAM, include:

- (a) Senior management participation at periodic meetings or site visits focused on reviewing the results of improvement initiatives (such as efforts to reduce corrective action backlogs and progress in completing the Performance Improvement Plan),
- (b) Conducting non-baseline IP 90003 and CAL follow-up inspections (not to exceed 200 hours of direct inspection over a maximum one-year period) without concurrence from the Deputy Director, NRO/DCIP,
- (c) Senior management participation at annual public meetings and authorization of the contents of the subsequent assessment letters.

The actions taken beyond those required by the CAM shall be discussed at the following mid-cycle and end-of-cycle review meetings to ensure an appropriate basis for needing the additional actions to oversee the licensee improvement initiatives. These actions will also be described in the following mid-cycle and annual assessment letters until the end of the extended period of time. All assessment letters that address these additional actions shall include the NRO/DCIP/CAEB branch chief on concurrence.

Region II must convey the specific actions that the licensee needs to address to remove the findings that caused the licensee to enter the

Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone column from consideration in the assessment program. The correspondence to the licensee describing the extension of the inspection finding(s) in the assessment program beyond the normal two quarters must be authorized by the appropriate regional division director with the concurrence of the Deputy Director, NRO/DCIP.

In addition, a licensee is expected to meet with the Commission within 6 months of entering Column 4 to discuss their plans for addressing the performance deficiencies and their plans for improvement.

e. Unacceptable Performance Column (Column 5).

1. Licensee performance is unacceptable and continued plant construction activity in the area of concern is not permitted within this column. Unacceptable performance represents situations in which the NRC lacks reasonable assurance that the licensee can or will construct the facility in accordance with the design basis. Examples of unacceptable performance may include:
 - (a) Multiple significant violations of the facility's license, regulations, or orders.
 - (b) Loss of confidence in the licensee's ability to construct the facility in accordance with the design basis (e.g., multiple examples where construction was determined to be outside of its design basis, either due to inappropriate modifications, the unavailability of design basis information, inadequate configuration management, or the demonstrated lack of an effective corrective action program.
 - (c) A pattern of failure of licensee management controls to effectively address previous significant concerns to prevent recurrence. In general, it is expected, but not required, that entry into the Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone column of the CAM and completion of supplemental IP 90003 will precede consideration of whether a plant is in the Unacceptable Performance Column.

Note: If the agency determines that a licensee's performance is unacceptable then an order may be issued to stop work in the area of concern.

2. The licensee is also expected to perform a third-party assessment of their safety culture.
3. The NRC will assess the licensee's evaluation of their safety culture, and independently perform a graded assessment of the licensee's safety culture using the guidance contained in IP 90003. A decision not to independently perform an assessment of the licensee's safety culture

would be a deviation from the CAM and would have to be approved in accordance with Section 07.03. However, the staff can use the results from a licensee's third-party safety culture assessment and the licensee's root cause evaluation to satisfy the inspection requirements, if the staff has completed a validation of the third-party assessment methodology and assessment effort and root cause evaluation.

4. The EDO/Deputy EDO (or designee) will meet with senior licensee management in a regulatory performance meeting to discuss the licensee's degraded performance and the corrective actions. The Commission will also meet with senior licensee management to discuss the issues which will need to be taken before construction of the facility can be resumed.

07.03 Deviations from the CAM. There may be rare instances in which the regulatory actions dictated by the CAM may not be appropriate. In these instances, the agency may deviate from the CAM to either increase or decrease agency action.

- a. A deviation is defined as any regulatory action taken that is inconsistent with the range of actions discussed in Section 07.02 of this IMC. Deviations from the CAM shall be documented in the appropriate letter to the licensee (i.e., assessment follow-up letter, mid-cycle letter, or annual assessment letter) or separate docketed correspondence.
- b. The EDO shall approve all deviations from the CAM and inform the Commission when deviations are approved and annually at the Commission meeting on the results of the Agency Action Review Meeting (AARM).
 1. Memoranda requesting deviations from the CAM should be initiated by the Region II Administrator to the EDO and should go through the Office Director of NRO for program office approval. Any deviations from the CAM shall be documented in the subsequent mid-cycle or annual assessment letter.
 2. Letters requesting deviations from the CAM should include a synopsis of the licensee performance deficiencies, the required NRC actions per the CAM for these inputs, the proposed alternative actions, and the region's rationale for requesting the deviation.

Deviations from the CAM may be considered for such things as: (1) multiple examples of non-SDP Severity Level III or greater enforcement actions, or (2) a type of finding unanticipated by the SDP that results in an inappropriate level of regulatory attention when entered into the CAM.

2505P-08 ADDITIONAL CAM GUIDANCE

08.01 Start Date of Findings in the Assessment Program. The start date used for consideration of inspection findings in the assessment program is the end of the

inspection activities that designate the issue as an apparent violation (AV), violation (VIO), finding (FIN), or non-cited violation (NCV). For quarterly integrated inspection reports, use the last day of the quarter being assessed. For all other inspection reports, use the last day of onsite inspection activities in which the item was identified as an AV, FIN, VIO, or NCV (often the date of the exit meeting, or the date of re-exit if disposition of the finding/violation changed since the original exit meeting). Unresolved Items should be dispositioned according to IMC 0613P, and appropriately updated in CIPIMS when additional information becomes available.

After a final determination of the significance of an inspection finding is made, CCI shall refer back to the appropriate date discussed above to determine if any additional action would have been taken had the significance of the inspection finding been known at that time.

Example: Consider the situation where a finding in the Construction/Installation cornerstone was white for the second quarter of the assessment cycle and there was an inspection finding in the same cornerstone from the second quarter of the assessment cycle whose final safety significance was determined to be white in the third quarter of the assessment cycle. In this case, the appropriate action would be to perform supplemental IP 90002 rather than IP 90001 since there were two white assessment inputs in the same cornerstone for the second quarter of the assessment cycle. This would be communicated to the licensee in the appropriate assessment letter.

08.02 Including and Removing Inspection Findings in the Assessment Program.

- a. Inspection findings may be held open more than two quarters if the corresponding supplemental inspection has not been conducted or reveals substantive inadequacies in the licensee's (1) evaluation of the root causes of the inspection finding, (2) determination of the extent of the performance problems, or (3) actions taken or planned to correct the issue. In this case, additional agency action, including additional enforcement actions or an expansion of the supplemental inspection procedure, may be needed to independently acquire the necessary information to satisfy the inspection requirements.

In these situations, the original performance issue will remain open and will not be removed from consideration in the assessment program until the inadequacies identified in the supplemental inspection are adequately addressed and corrected, or a supplemental inspection has been completed successfully. In the associated inspection report, CCI must convey the specific weaknesses that the licensee needs to address in order to remove this finding from consideration in the assessment program. The correspondence to the licensee describing the extension of an inspection finding in the assessment process beyond the normal two quarters due to a significant weakness in the

licensee's evaluation of the performance issue must be authorized by the appropriate CCI division director after consulting with the Deputy Director, NRO/DCIP.

If inspection findings are extended beyond the original two quarters, the CAM column can be changed upon successful completion of the supplemental inspection and issuance of the associated inspection report (or other agency action), and an assessment follow-up letter noting the change in column (assessment follow-up letters are only required for reduction in the CAM column when held-open findings are being closed out). However, the findings will still be considered (counted towards future column determination) in the CAM for the remainder of the quarter.

- b. For greater-than-green inspection findings with associated cross-cutting aspects that are held open for greater than two quarters, the cross-cutting aspect will be considered as input for cSCCI determination as long as that finding is open.

08.03 Additional Supplemental Inspection and ROP Action Matrix Guidance.

- a. Generally, the supplemental inspection procedure associated with the most significant applicable column of the CAM should be performed once. Until that supplemental inspection is satisfactorily completed, the licensee shall remain in the applicable column of the CAM.
- b. The scope of supplemental inspections should include all white, yellow, or red findings in all cornerstones and strategic performance areas. For example, if an IP 90002 inspection is being performed due to a yellow finding in the Construction/Installation Cornerstone, the scope should also include any white inspection findings in that cornerstone or any other area.

If an IP 90002 inspection is being performed due to three white findings in the Construction Reactor Safety Strategic Performance Area, the scope should include all white inspection findings in all strategic performance areas and cornerstones.

- c. If a greater-than-green inspection finding is approaching the end of the two quarters it is considered in the CAM, and the licensee is ready for the supplemental inspection, the IP 90001 inspection can be conducted, even though this finding and other CAM inputs will be subject to a future IP 90002 inspection.

If the IP 90001 inspection is successful, the licensee would stay in the Degraded Cornerstone Column of the CAM until the IP 90002 is successful. However, the closed finding would not be used to determine whether the licensee will transition to the Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone column.

For example, if an inspection finding starts in quarter one and the licensee has two or more greater-than-green inputs in quarter two, the NRC can conduct the

IP 90001 inspection on the first issue in quarter two if the licensee is ready, even though they are not ready for the IP 90002 inspection.

Example: A plant has a white finding starting in Quarter one, the NRC completes an IP 90001 inspection in Quarter two, and the plant has another white input starting in Quarter two. Since the plant would be in the degraded cornerstone Column in Quarter two, the licensee would stay in the Degraded Cornerstone Column until the IP 90002 inspection is completed satisfactorily (even though the initial white finding would no longer be active in the CAM). The initial white finding would also not be used to determine whether the plant would transition to the Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone Column.

If the IP 90001 inspection is completed successfully in the second quarter, the licensee will remain in the Degraded Cornerstone Column until all aspects of the IP 90002 inspection scope are successfully completed. However, the closed inspection finding (which started in quarter one) will not be used when determining if the licensee should transition to the Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone Column.

Likewise, any inspection finding that is satisfactorily inspected and resolved through the conduct of a IP 90002 inspection, and is considered isolated from the other findings inspected, can be removed from consideration in the CAM once the finding has been input into the CAM for two quarters. The basis for the NRC's actions should be stated in the inspection report cover letter. The cover letter should also include the licensee actions necessary to close the remaining (held open) issues.

- d. If a white inspection finding subsequently occurs in an unrelated cornerstone or strategic performance area, the associated supplemental inspection should be conducted at the appropriate level.

For example, if two white findings are discovered in the Procurement/Fabrication Cornerstone, then the region inspects using IP 90002. If an additional white inspection finding is discovered in the Design/Engineering cornerstone, then the regional office should inspect this finding using IP 90001 unless the additional finding can be inspected during the previously scheduled IP 90002 inspection.

08.04 Corrective Action Program Inspections.

Each time a facility enters the Degraded Cornerstone Column of the CAM, CCI should assess the benefit of performing an additional CAP team inspection in accordance with IP 35007. One additional inspection should be considered for the two-year period following the quarter in which the facility reached the Degraded Cornerstone Column of the CAM. In those instances where an additional inspection is deemed appropriate, CCI should provide the basis for its decision to conduct the inspection in the appropriate

assessment letter (annual assessment letter, mid-cycle letter, or assessment follow-up letter) to the licensee.

08.05 Traditional Enforcement Follow up Inspections.

Traditional enforcement violations are independent of the findings that result in a plant being assigned to a specific column of the action matrix. However, a traditional enforcement violation should normally receive follow up using IP 92702, "Followup on Corrective Actions for Violations and Deviations," to ensure that it has been captured in the licensee's corrective action program. An assessment of the overall traditional enforcement history during the previous 12 months is conducted during the mid-cycle and end-of-cycle reviews. The regulatory significance of escalated traditional enforcement actions or multiple Severity Level IV violations in one of the traditional enforcement areas of willfulness, impeding the regulatory process, and actual consequences may indicate the need to perform more detailed follow up.

Conducting IP 92722, "Follow Up Inspection For Any Severity Level I or II Traditional Enforcement Violation or for Two or More Severity Level III Traditional Enforcement Violations in a 12 Month Period," should be considered to follow up on any Severity Level I or II traditional enforcement violation or for two or more Severity Level III violations in any 12 month period. Conducting IP 92723, "Follow Up Inspection for Three or More Severity Level IV Traditional Enforcement Violations in the Same Area in a 12-Month Period," should be considered to follow up whenever a licensee has been issued three or more Severity Level IV violations in one of the traditional enforcement areas of willfulness, impeding the regulatory process or actual consequences during any 12- month period.

If follow up of traditional enforcement actions are planned, they should be coordinated with any supplemental inspections to avoid duplication of effort. Follow up of traditional enforcement actions is not considered a deviation from the CAM since traditional enforcement actions are not an input to the CAM.

2505P-09 CONSTRUCTION SUBSTANTIVE CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES (cSCCI)

In addition to the consideration of inspection findings in the assessment program, the staff will determine if underlying weaknesses in areas important to safety culture need to be communicated to the licensee. The NRC will use cSCCIs to communicate to the licensee weaknesses identified in a construction site safety culture. It is expected that licensees will evaluate the findings in these areas to identify the cause(s) for the weakness and implement appropriate actions to improve the construction site performance.

09.01. Identifying construction cross-cutting components aspects and cSCCIs. In order to determine whether cSCCIs exist at a site, an assessment must be performed during the preparation for the mid-cycle and end-of-cycle review meetings. This is a three-step process.

- a. Identify construction cross-cutting component aspect. During inspections, findings (and any developments associated with the issue) are reviewed by the inspector to identify the cause(s) associated with the construction cross-cutting component aspect, if any exists. Inspectors should have made this decision based on available causal information. The level of information available on the cause(s) for an issue is normally commensurate with the significance of the issue. As part of the inspection process, inspectors should have identified the cause(s) that provides the most meaningful insight into the performance deficiency. Inspectors are not expected to perform independent causal evaluations beyond what would be appropriate for the significance of the issue to obtain more precise information.

Determining whether or not a finding is a SCWE issue depends on the environment for raising concerns rather than an individual performance issue. As a result, the inspector should have confirmed that: (1) the behavior or interaction which impacted the free flow of information relative to construction quality occurred; (2) other individuals witnessed the behavior or interaction; (3) the behavior or interaction would reasonably discourage individuals from raising construction quality issues; and (4) other individuals perceived the behavior or interaction as discouraging the raising of construction quality concerns. During the inspection, the inspector and their branch chief should contact the SCWE Finding Review Group (chaired by the Agency Allegation Advisor) to discuss the potential assignment of a SCWE construction cross-cutting component aspect.

In order to support the evaluation of findings with their assigned construction cross-cutting component aspect(s), the inspectors should have provided sufficient detail in their inspection report. If the construction cross-cutting component aspect assignment to a finding changes following issuance of an inspection report, the change should also be discussed with the licensee in a re-exit and documented in the integrated report that is open at the time of the revision. Transmittal letters for inspection reports that contain findings with associated construction cross-cutting component aspects should request that licensees who disagree with the associated construction cross-cutting component aspect respond in writing within 30 days of the date of the inspection report and provide the basis for their disagreement to the regional office.

- b. Evaluate findings. Prepare for the semiannual meetings by evaluating the findings that had been previously documented with a construction cross-cutting component aspect in the applicable inspection report in accordance with IMC 0613P. There should typically be only one principal cause and one construction cross-cutting component aspect associated with each finding. However, on rare occasion it may be appropriate for some unique or complex inspection findings with multiple root causes to be associated with more than one construction cross-cutting component aspect. In these cases, the regional office must obtain concurrence from the Chief, CAEB in NRO.
- c. Identify cSCCIs. The findings should be examined to identify whether there are four or more findings that have the same assigned construction cross-cutting component aspect. The cause of the findings should not be evaluated with any

greater degree of precision, such as attempting to identify a partial construction cross-cutting component aspect.

09.02 Criteria for a cSCCI not related to a SCWE. A cSCCI exists if both of the following criteria are met:

- a. There are four or more findings with the same construction cross-cutting component aspect in the current semiannual reporting period. Observations that are not findings should not be considered in this determination.
- b. The agency has a concern with the licensee's scope of efforts or progress in addressing the cSCCI. In evaluating whether this criterion is met, CCI should consider if any of the following situations exist:
 1. The licensee had not identified or recognized that the cSCCI affected other areas and had not taken appropriate actions to address it.
 2. The licensee recognized that the cSCCI affected other areas but failed to develop and implement appropriate corrective action.
 3. The licensee recognized that the cSCCI affected other areas but did not implement corrective actions in a timely manner.
 4. The licensee has implemented a range of actions to address the cSCCI; however, these actions have not yet proven effective in substantially mitigating the cSCCI, even though a reasonable time has passed.

09.03 Criteria for a cSCCI related to a SCWE. A cSCCI related to SCWE (for aspects associated with the "Environment for Raising Concerns" or "Preventing, Detecting, and Mitigating Perceptions of Retaliation" construction cross-cutting components) would exist if during a 12-month assessment period the following two criteria are met:

- a. There was an impact on the SCWE that was not isolated, and at least one of the following conditions exists:
 1. At least one aspect from either the construction cross-cutting component of "Environment for Raising Concerns" or "Preventing, Detecting, and Mitigating Perceptions of Retaliation" has been assigned to a greater-than-minor finding in the current semiannual reporting period. Observations that are not findings should not be considered in this determination.
 2. The licensee received a chilling effect letter.
 3. The licensee has received correspondence from the NRC that transmitted an enforcement action with a Severity Level of I, II, or III and involved discrimination, or received a confirmatory order that involved discrimination.
- b. The agency has a concern with the licensee's scope of efforts or progress in

addressing the individual and collective performance deficiencies that satisfied the previous criteria for SCWE. In evaluating whether these criteria are met, CCI should consider if any of the following situations exist:

1. The licensee had not identified or recognized that the SCWE concern affected other areas and had not taken adequate actions to address it.
2. The licensee recognized that the SCWE concern affected other areas but failed to schedule or take appropriate corrective action.
3. The licensee recognized that the SCWE concern affected other areas but did not implement corrective actions in a timely manner.
4. The licensee has implemented a range of actions to address the SCWE concern; however, these actions have not yet proven effective in substantially mitigating the area of concern, even though a reasonable duration of time has passed.

09.04 Documentation and Follow-Up Actions

- a. The assessment letter should summarize the specific cSCCI in one to two paragraphs of text including:
 1. Identifying the findings and their common construction cross-cutting component used to identify the cSCCI, including a list of the specific construction cross-cutting component aspects and how it was determined to apply.
 2. Placing the cSCCI in the proper safety perspective (impact to construction QA)
 3. Describing the agency's action in the baseline program to monitor the issue, specifically indicating how the staff will follow up on the cSCCI. The following are examples of how the staff may follow up on a cSCCI:
 - (a) Through reviews of corrective actions trend data conducted at the mid-cycle and end-of-cycle reviews.
 - (b) As a corrective action follow-up inspection item performed in accordance with IP 35007.
 - (c) During a QA inspection in accordance with IP 35007.
 4. Stating the agency's assessment of the licensee's ability to address the cSCCI or the licensee's progress to correct the issue.
 5. Defining criteria for clearing the cSCCI.

- b. In the absence of clarification in the assessment letter, the decision to continue to highlight a cSCCI in the next assessment will be based on the criteria used to initiate a cSCCI.

If the number of findings in the current assessment is less than the cSCCI threshold, the existing cSCCI will be cleared, unless there is an overlapping CAL that remains open.

- c. If a plant has been issued a CAL that contains improvement issues similar to the cSCCI, then the follow-up is not based on meeting the conditions for a cSCCI since the completion of the licensee's commitments as specified in the CAL takes precedence.
- d. When the NRC identifies a cSCCI in the mid-cycle or end-of-cycle assessment letter, the licensee should place this issue into its CAP, perform an analysis of causes of the issue, and develop appropriate corrective actions. The licensee's completed evaluation may be reviewed by the regional office (or CCI) and documented in the next mid-cycle or end-of-cycle assessment letter.
- e. If a cSCCI is discussed in a mid-cycle or end-of-cycle assessment letter, then the next assessment letter should address the licensee's performance in this area. CCI will evaluate the findings for the current assessment period with construction cross-cutting component aspects against the above listed criteria and the criteria for clearing the cSCCI as outlined in the assessment letter.

The next assessment letter will state one of the following:

- 1. The issue has been satisfactorily resolved and references the inspection report that documented the follow-up or summarizes the agency's assessment against the above listed criteria.
 - 2. The licensee still meets criterion in subsection 08.01.b of this IMC; however, the agency does not have a concern with the licensee's scope of efforts or progress in addressing the issue, and therefore, the cSCCI has been closed.
 - 3. A summary of the licensee's progress in addressing the issue.
- f. In the second consecutive assessment letter identifying the same cSCCI, CCI may consider requesting that:
 - 1. The licensee provide a response at the annual public meeting,
 - 2. The licensee provide a written response to the cSCCI raised in the assessment letters, or
 - 3. A separate meeting be held with the licensee.
 - g. In the third consecutive assessment letter identifying the same cSCCI the regional

office would typically request that the licensee perform an assessment of safety culture. CCI could conclude a safety culture assessment request is not warranted if the licensee has made reasonable progress in addressing the issue but has not yet met the specific closure criteria for the issue. Typically, this safety culture evaluation would consist of a licensee independent assessment.

CCI should review the licensee's safety culture assessment using appropriate elements from IP 90003. The focus of the review effort will be to confirm that the licensee is appropriately dealing with the weaknesses identified by their safety culture assessment.

The overview of NRC's assessment should be documented in the next assessment letter. If CCI believes the licensee has failed to resolve the cSCCI in a timely manner, CCI should consider conducting a focused IP 35007 team inspection to ensure an appropriate level of oversight of the corrective actions involving the safety culture of the facility.

- h. In recognition that SCWE-related cSCCIs are much more difficult for licensees to address and for licensee remedial actions to take effect, the regional office can defer requesting the licensee to conduct a safety culture assessment, and the consideration of conducting the IP 35007 follow-up team inspection until the fourth consecutive assessment letter identifying the same cSCCI with the SCWE construction cross-cutting component.

2505P-10 PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

The construction assessment program consists of a series of reviews which are described below.

10.01 Continuous Review. The NRC begins its continuous review of licensee performance once construction-related inspections commence at a proposed unit. Inspections are conducted on a continuous basis in accordance with IMC 2502, IMC 2503, and IMC 2504. Inspection results are continuously monitored by the CCI site construction team (region-based inspectors, resident inspectors (if applicable), and branch chiefs). Inspection plan adjustments will be made as necessary.

Prior to the beginning of quarterly reviews in accordance with Section 10.02 of this IMC, the column designations in the CAM do not apply. However, the construction inspection team shall use the CAM as a guide to determine the appropriate agency response to inspection findings.

Once quarterly reviews have begun in accordance with Section 10.02 of this IMC, CCI may issue an assessment follow-up letter during the quarter to address a greater-than-green inspection finding that is finalized during the quarter. The assessment follow-up letter may be combined with the final SDP determination letter. The assessment follow-up letter should discuss the planned actions and note appropriate changes to the plant's designation in the CAM.

10.02 Quarterly Review. Quarterly reviews begin after an LWA and/or a COL has been issued, the NRC has implemented either IMC 2502, 2503 or 2504, and there is sufficient activity occurring for a quarterly review to be meaningful. The NRC will notify the licensee when quarterly reviews begin.

- a. Requirements. CCI conducts a quarterly review for each plant under construction within five weeks following the conclusion of each quarter of the annual assessment cycle.
- b. Preparation. The responsible CCI Division of Construction Projects (DCP) branch chief reviews the applicable inspection findings to identify any performance trends. The branch chief shall use the CAM to help identify if there are NRC actions that should be considered which are not already embedded in the existing inspection plan.
- c. Conducting the quarterly review. CCI determines the appropriate CAM column for each plant and communicates the results to headquarters. Since inspection findings count in the assessment program for two quarters, the staff may become aware that a plant will reach a repetitive degraded cornerstone categorization prior to five consecutive quarters actually being completed. When CCI determines that a plant will reach a repetitive degraded cornerstone, an assessment letter should be issued stating that the changes to the planned actions are consistent with the Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone Column in the CAM and make the appropriate change to the CAM Summary.

Additionally, for plants whose performance is in the Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone Column of the CAM, consideration shall be given at each quarterly review of engaging senior licensee and agency management in discussions associated with declaring licensee performance to be unacceptable in accordance with the guidance contained within this IMC and taking additional regulatory actions (as appropriate).

- d. Quarterly review output. The output of the quarterly review is a quarterly assessment follow-up letter, if required. Assessment follow-up letters should be issued within two weeks after the quarterly review for any new greater-than-green inspection findings. If, based on the continuous review as discussed above, the region issued an assessment follow-up letter for inspection findings during the past quarter, then a subsequent quarterly assessment follow-up letter is not required if its only purpose is to reiterate issues that had been previously addressed to the licensee. If there are significant changes in the inspection plan for a plant in the Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone Column of the CAM, the region should issue a separate assessment follow-up letter in order to ensure the licensee is aware of these changes. If there is no column change since the last assessment letter, a quarterly assessment follow-up letter is not required. Assessment follow-up letters are not required for leftward movement in the CAM, unless a held-open finding is being closed out.

10.03 Mid-Cycle Review.

- a. Requirements. CCI conducts a mid-cycle review for each plant using inspection findings compiled over the previous 6 months and those held open longer per Section 06.03 of this IMC. This review incorporates activities from the quarterly review that followed the end of the first quarter of the CY and will normally be completed within seven weeks of the end of the second quarter of the annual assessment cycle. Additional activities include planning inspection activities for approximately 6 months and discussing any insights into potential construction substantive cross-cutting issues (cSCCIs).

The mid-cycle review and subsequent mid-cycle letter should only discuss issues from inspections that were completed prior to the end of the mid-cycle assessment period.

- b. Preparation. In preparation for the mid-cycle reviews, CCI should:
 1. Compile the applicable inspection findings, the qualitative results from the quality assurance inspections conducted during the assessment period, and the proposed inspection plan for each plant.
 2. Develop a Mid-Cycle Plant Performance Summary (Exhibit 3). Each page of the plant performance summary should be clearly marked as “pre-decisional” to ensure that the document is handled properly and not inadvertently released to the public.

The Plant Performance Summary packages will form the basis for the mid-cycle letter, as well as providing input to the next end-of-cycle review meeting. The Plant Performance Summary should include:

- (a) An executive summary
 - (b) A performance overview
 - (c) Potential for change in regulatory response
 - (d) Analysis of cross-cutting issues
 - (e) Miscellaneous Topics
 - (f) A proposed inspection plan
- c. Conducting the mid-cycle review. The mid-cycle review meeting is chaired by the CCI/DCP Director, or designee. The responsible DCP branch chief should take the lead in presenting the overall results of the review of their plants to the division director. The DCI branch chiefs shall coordinate with the appropriate DCP branch chief to provide adequate support for the presentation and the development of the inspection plan.

Other participants should include applicable resident inspectors and a representative from NRO/DCIP and NRO/DNRL. Additional participants may include the regional allegations coordinator or the agency allegations advisor, and any other additional resources deemed necessary by CCI.

The following representatives should also participate if there are pertinent performance issues that should be factored into the performance for a particular plant: OI, OE, NSIR, and RES.

The role of the various headquarters participants during the mid-cycle meeting is to provide: (1) an opportunity for these offices to share any significant insights into licensee performance over the course of the annual assessment period, (2) an independent validation of the regional office's assessment of licensee performance from their office's perspective, and (3) clarifying or ancillary remarks regarding ongoing or current issues under their cognizance.

The agency allegations advisor, the NRO construction experience lead, and the NRO DRNL project manager will provide any significant insights to CCI at least one week in advance of the mid-cycle meeting.

The average time allocated for each plant review is intended to be between 20 minutes and one hour. The time allotted per review should be consistent with the number and significance of plant issues.

- d. Mid-cycle review output. The output of the mid-cycle review is a mid-cycle letter. The mid-cycle letter shall be issued within nine weeks of the end of the completion of the second quarter assessment period. Signature authority for the mid-cycle letter is determined by the most significant column of the CAM that the plant has been in over the first two quarters of the current assessment cycle. For example, findings from the previous assessment cycle that were no longer active in the assessment process during the first two quarters of the current assessment cycle would not factor in to the signature authority determination.

The mid-cycle letter shall contain:

1. A summary of greater-than-green inspection findings for the most recent two quarters as well as a discussion of previous actions taken by the licensee and the agency relative to these issues. Any changes in CAM column status since the end of the previous cycle assessment period shall be noted. Performance issues from previous quarters may be discussed if:
 - (a) The agency's response to an issue had not been adequately captured in previous correspondence to the licensee.
 - (b) These issues, when combined with assessment inputs from the most recent quarter, result in increased regulatory action per the

CAM that would not be apparent from reviewing only the most recent quarter's results.

2. A discussion of any deviations from the CAM during the assessment period.
3. For plants that have remained in the Degraded Cornerstone Column for one year or more, a discussion on why the licensee has remained in this column for an extended period of time and how they plan to address the performance issues.
4. For plants that are in the Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone Column, a discussion of the performance issues contributing to the licensee being placed in this column and the licensee actions being taken to address the performance problems.
5. A qualitative discussion of cSCCIs, if applicable.
6. A discussion of the licensee's progress in addressing a substantive cross-cutting issue, if documented in the previous mid-cycle or annual assessment letter.
7. A brief discussion of cross-cutting themes that were assessed and determined to not be an cSCCI.
8. A discussion of (1) non-SDP enforcement actions having Severity Level III or greater significance, including the planned Agency response, and/or (2) if the licensee has met the criteria for implementing IP 92723 to follow up on any non-escalated traditional enforcement actions. CCI may, if desired, indicate if the licensee is approaching the criteria for an IP 92723 follow-up inspection.
9. A discussion of findings that are currently being evaluated by the SDP that may affect the inspection plan.
10. A statement of any actions to be taken by the agency in response to safety-significant issues, as well as any actions taken by the licensee.
11. An inspection plan consisting of approximately 6 months (from the issuance of the mid-cycle letter) of activities. The 6 month inspection plan may contain a footnote stating that changes to the licensee's construction schedule can directly affect the inspection plan.

10.04 End-of-Cycle Review.

- a. Requirements. CCI conducts an end-of-cycle review for each plant using inspection findings compiled over the previous 6 months and those held open longer per Section 06.03. CCI may also consider insights documented in the

most recently issued quality assurance inspection report. The review meeting will normally be held within seven weeks of the end of the assessment cycle.

The end-of-cycle review and subsequent annual assessment letters should discuss issues where the inspection was completed prior to the end of the assessment period. Additional end-of-cycle activities include planning inspection activities for approximately 6 months, discussing any potential construction cSCCIs, and developing an input (if applicable) to support the AARM.

The CAM will be used to determine the scope of agency actions in response to assessment inputs.

b. Preparation. In preparation for the end-of-cycle reviews, CCI should:

1. Compile the applicable inspection findings, the qualitative results from the quality assurance inspections conducted during the assessment period, and the proposed inspection plan for each plant.
2. Develop an End-of-Cycle Plant Performance Summary (Exhibit 4). Each page of the Plant Performance Summary should be clearly marked as “pre-decisional” to ensure that the document is handled properly and not inadvertently released to the public.

The Plant Performance Summary packages will form the basis for the end-of-cycle assessment letter, as well as providing input to the next mid-cycle review meeting. The Plant Performance Summary should include:

- (a) An executive summary
- (b) A performance overview
- (c) Potential for change in regulatory response
- (d) Analysis of cross-cutting issues
- (e) Miscellaneous Topics
- (f) A proposed inspection plan

c. Conducting the end-of-cycle review. The end-of-cycle review meeting is chaired by CCI/DCP Director, or designee. The responsible DCP branch chief should take the lead in presenting the overall results of the review of their plants to the division director. The CCI/DCI branch chiefs shall coordinate with the responsible DCP branch chief to provide adequate support for the presentation and the development of the inspection plan.

Other participants should include applicable resident inspectors and a

representative from NRO/DCIP and NRO/DNRL. Additional participants may include the regional allegations coordinator or the agency allegations advisor, and any other additional resources deemed necessary by CCI.

The following representatives should also participate if there are pertinent performance issues that should be factored into the performance for a particular plant: OI, OE, NSIR, and RES.

The role of the various headquarters participants during the end-of-cycle meeting is to provide: (1) an opportunity for these offices to share any significant insights into licensee performance over the course of the annual assessment period, (2) an independent validation of the regional office's assessment of licensee performance from their office's perspective, and (3) clarifying or ancillary remarks regarding ongoing or current issues under their cognizance.

The agency allegations advisor, the NRO construction experience lead, and the NRO DRNL project manager will provide any significant insights to CCI at least one week in advance of the end-of-cycle meeting.

The average time allocated for each plant review is intended to be between 20 minutes and one hour. The time allotted per review should be consistent with the number and significance of plant issues.

- d. End-of-cycle review output. The output of the end-of-cycle review is an end-of-cycle letter. The end-of-cycle letter shall be issued within nine weeks of the end of the completion of the fourth quarter assessment period. Signature authority for each annual assessment letter is determined by the most significant column of the Action Matrix that the plant has been in over the four quarters of the assessment cycle. The end-of-cycle letter shall contain:
1. A summary of greater-than-green inspection findings for the most recent two quarters as well as discussion of previous actions taken by the licensee and the agency relative to these issues. Any changes in CAM column status since the end of the previous cycle assessment period shall be noted. Performance issues from previous quarters may be discussed if:
 - (a) The agency's response to an issue had not been adequately captured in previous correspondence to the licensee.
 - (b) These issues, when combined with assessment inputs from the most recent quarter, result in increased regulatory action per the CAM that would not be apparent from reviewing only the most recent quarter's results.
 2. A discussion of any deviations from the CAM during the assessment period.

3. For plants that have remained in the Degraded Cornerstone Column for one and one half years or more, a discussion on why the licensee has remained in this column for such a period of time and how they plan to address the performance issues.
4. For plants that are in the Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone Column, a discussion of the performance issues contributing to the licensee being placed in this column and the licensee actions being taken to address the performance problems.
5. A qualitative discussion of cSCCIs, if applicable.
6. A discussion of the licensee's progress in addressing a substantive cross-cutting issue, if documented in the previous mid-cycle or annual assessment letter.
7. A brief discussion of cross-cutting themes that were assessed and determined to not be an cSCCI.
8. A discussion of (1) non-SDP enforcement actions having Severity Level III or greater significance, including the planned Agency response, and/or (2) if the licensee has met the criteria for implementing IP 92723 to follow up on any non-escalated traditional enforcement actions. CCI may, if desired, indicate if the licensee is approaching the criteria for an IP 92723 follow-up inspection.
9. A discussion of findings that are currently being evaluated by the SDP that may affect the inspection plan.
10. A statement of any actions to be taken by the agency in response to safety-significant issues, as well as any actions taken by the licensee.
11. An inspection plan consisting of approximately 6 months (from the issuance of the end-of-cycle letter) of activities.

10.05 End-of-Cycle Summary Meeting. The End-of-Cycle Summary Meeting is conducted following the conclusion of the end-of-cycle review meetings to summarize the results of the end-of-cycle review with the Director, NRO (or designee).

- a. Requirements. The End-of-Cycle Summary Meeting is an informational meeting whose purpose is for regional management to engage headquarters management to ensure awareness of:
 1. Plants to be discussed at the AARM,
 2. Plants with significant performance issues,

3. Plants with open CAM deviations,
4. Plants with cSSCIs, and
5. Agency actions already taken in response to plant performance.

The End-of-Cycle Summary Meeting will be scheduled after the completion of all the end-of-cycle meetings but before the issuance of the annual assessment letters.

- b. Preparation. DCIP/CAEB will develop an agenda for the meeting with input from CCI. Region II should provide their input to CAEB three working days prior to the meeting.
- c. Conducting the End-of-Cycle Summary Meeting. The DRAC will lead the discussion for CCI. The discussion should:
 1. Summarize the results of the end-of-cycle review for those plants whose performance in one or more quarters in the past twelve months has been in the Degraded Cornerstone column, Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone column, or Unacceptable Performance column of the CAM.
 2. Present the results for those plants that CCI considers to have current cSSCIs that would be included in the annual assessment letter.
 3. Discuss any open deviations from the CAM, including their bases and actions required to close.

2505P-11 PROGRAM REVIEWS

11.01 Agency Action Review Meeting. An AARM is conducted several weeks after issuance of the annual assessment letters. This meeting is attended by appropriate senior NRC managers and is chaired by the Executive Director for Operations (EDO) or designee.

This meeting is a collegial review by senior NRC managers of:

- a. The appropriateness of agency actions for plants with significant performance issues based on data compiled during the end-of-cycle review and those that have moved into the “Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone” or the “Unacceptable Performance” Columns during the first quarter of the year in which the AARM is held,
- b. Trends in overall industry performance,
- c. The appropriateness of agency actions concerning fuel cycle facilities and other materials licensees with significant performance problems,

- d. The results of the ROP self-assessment, including a review of approved deviations from the Action Matrix, and
- e. The results of the cROP self-assessment, including a review of approved deviations from the CAM.

Management Directive 8.14, "Agency Action Review Meeting," includes a more complete description of the meeting.

11.02 Commission Meeting. The EDO will brief the Commission annually to convey the results of the AARM, including a discussion of any deviations from the CAM. The Commission should be briefed within approximately 4 weeks of the AARM, consistent with Commission availability, to ensure that the information presented is as current as possible.

2505P-12 PUBLIC STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

12.01 Scheduling. Involvement of the public in the discussion of the results of the NRC's annual assessment of the licensee's performance can occur in various ways once the annual assessment letters have been issued. For the discussion of licensee security performance at public meetings, refer to IMC 0321.

Public stakeholder involvement in the discussion of the results of the NRC's annual assessment of the licensee's performance should be conducted no earlier than one week after the annual assessment letters are issued in order to allow time for the licensee to review the contents of the letter. As applicable and if possible, the annual public meeting to discuss the NRC's assessment of the licensee's construction performance should be coordinated with the ROP-required annual public meeting to discuss the NRC's assessment of co-located operating reactor(s) performance.

For plants that have been in the Degraded Cornerstone, Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone, or Unacceptable Performance Column of the CAM, involvement of the public in a meeting or some other appropriate venue should be scheduled within 16 weeks of the end of the assessment period. The 16-week guideline may occasionally be exceeded to accommodate the regional office or licensee's schedule.

For plants that have been in the Licensee Response or Regulatory Response Column of the CAM during the entire assessment period, public stakeholder involvement should be scheduled within six months of the issuance of the annual assessment letter.

CCI should use this opportunity to engage interested stakeholders on the performance of the plant and the role of the agency in ensuring that the plant is being constructed in accordance with its design. Public involvement can include a formal public meeting with the licensee, a meeting tailored to the public, an open house for the public, poster sessions, or other similar activities. Two separate venues/events can be considered, such as a public assessment meeting with the licensee and a public event to discuss

topics of public interest.

The event should be conducted onsite or in the vicinity of the site and should be scheduled to ensure that it is accessible to members of the public. In determining what type of event or forum to conduct, CCI should consider, among other things, plant performance, public interest in plant performance, any discussion the regions need to have with the licensee, and any other areas of public interest.

12.02 Preparation. CCI shall notify those on distribution for the annual assessment letters of the opportunity for public involvement in the discussion of the results of the NRC's annual assessment and the media and State and local government officials of the event with the licensee and the issuance of the annual assessment letter.

CCI should consider the level of historical interest and performance issues, and should use the following additional tools, as appropriate, to inform members of the public of the event: press releases, advertisements in local newspapers, or letters soliciting attendance and/or interest to known parties.

CCI should also consult with the regional public affairs staff in determining the end-of-cycle meetings and/or events at each site. NRC management, as specified in the CAM and determined by the most significant column that the plant has been in over the assessment cycle, should normally be involved at the event. For plants with heightened stakeholder interest, media inquiry, or contentious issues, the region should consider sending an appropriate level of management needed to respond to stakeholder interest and effectively conduct the meeting. For plants that have been in the Degraded Cornerstone, Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone, or Unacceptable Performance Column of the CAM, a formal public meeting with the licensee is required, at a minimum. These plants may also be required to meet with the Commission depending on the circumstances as discussed in Section 07.02.

12.03 Conduct. The annual involvement of the public in the results of the NRC's assessment of licensee performance is intended to provide an opportunity for the NRC to engage interested stakeholders on the performance of the licensee in constructing the plant and the role of the agency in ensuring the plant is constructed in accordance with the design.

The annual assessment letters provide the minimum performance information that should be conveyed to the licensee in a public meeting, if conducted. However, this does not preclude the presentation of additional plant performance information when placed in the proper context. The licensee should be given the opportunity to respond at the meeting to any information contained in the annual assessment letter. The licensee should also be given the opportunity to present to the NRC any new or existing programs that are designed to maintain or improve their current performance.

If a meeting is held with a licensee, it will be a Category 1 public meeting in accordance with the Commission's policy on public meetings, with the exception that the meeting must be closed for such portions which may involve matters that should not be publicly disclosed under Section 2.390 of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR

2.390). Members of the public, the press, and government officials from other agencies are considered as observers during the conduct of the meeting. However, attendees should be given the opportunity to ask questions of the NRC representatives after the conclusion of the meeting.

Public involvement in the results of the NRC's assessment of licensee performance should focus on topics of interest to the public. The format for the public involvement should not be limited to a Category 3 type meeting; it could include an open house, round table discussion, or poster board session. For higher-profile events, consideration should include agency or non-agency facilitators.

2505P-13 CORRECTIVE ACTION PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS REVIEWS

13.01 Objective of Corrective Action Programs. A fundamental goal of the NRC's oversight of new construction activities is to establish confidence that licensees (and their contractors) are detecting and correcting problems in a manner that ensures quality and safety are paramount and that construction activities will be completed in a manner that ensures each plant is constructed in accordance with the design and will operate safely. A key premise of NRC oversight is that weaknesses in a licensee's CAP will manifest themselves as performance issues that will be identified during the inspection program. Completion of these objectives is accomplished by resident inspectors screening CAP issues on a frequent basis, by performing a semiannual trend review, by sampling issues during each inspection, by follow-up of selected NRC identified issues, and by performing periodic team inspections in accordance with IP 35007.

13.02 Use of NCVs. As authorized in Enforcement Guidance Memorandum 11-02, "Enforcement Discretion for Licensee-Identified Violations at Power Reactor Construction Sites Pursuant to 10 CFR Part 52," dated June 3, 2011, the NRC staff may issue NCVs for licensee-identified violations provided that the appropriate criteria listed in the Enforcement Policy are met. The use of NCVs for NRC-identified and self-revealing issues as part of the enforcement process is predicated on a licensee having an adequate CAP into which identified issues are entered and effectively resolved in a timely manner. Because the CAP at construction sites will be new and implemented initially by individuals with limited experience with the new program and because construction will involve program implementation by contractors, the NRC will delay the use of NCVs for NRC-identified and self-revealing violations pending confirmation that the new program had been adequately developed and implemented. Therefore, prior to or near the beginning of construction for each plant, inspections of the QA program will be conducted to allow the NRC to gather sufficient information to make a timely decision that the licensee has demonstrated its CAP is being implemented in a manner that supports issuing NCVs for NRC-identified and self-revealing violations. After the staff has concluded that a licensee's CAP has been adequately developed and implemented, inspections in accordance with IP 35007 will be conducted on a normal schedule.

13.03 Corrective action program inspections. Inspections will be conducted in accordance with IP 35007 to review the CAP program and to review the licensee's

implementation of the CAP. These inspections can be done either as a single inspection or as two separate inspections. Since a licensee would need to have a CAP in place prior to the start of construction, the program review could be completed before construction begins. For the implementation inspection, sufficient CAP activity should have occurred prior to conducting the inspection. The results of resident and other inspections (e.g., vendor, remote location, specialist inspections) should be considered along with the results of the IP 35007 inspection in formulating a decision.

13.04 Demonstration of effectiveness. In order for the licensee to successfully demonstrate to the NRC the adequacy of their CAP, the inspections (e.g., QA, baseline, vendor) conducted previously cannot have identified any significant issues related to the implementation of the CAP. Significant issues are considered to be any greater-than-green findings or any cSCCIs related to an area of the CAP. If significant issues have been previously identified, then review of the licensee's corrective actions for those issues should be conducted to ensure that effective corrective actions have been taken to resolve the issues such that there is reasonable assurance that they will not recur.

Both a programmatic and implementation inspection should be conducted to determine if the licensee's CAP has been adequately developed and implemented before a conclusion can be reached on its sufficiency to support issuance of NCVs for NRC-identified and self-revealing violations. The determination of whether or not the licensee's CAP has been adequately demonstrated for the purpose of issuing NCVs for NRC-identified and self-revealing violations should be documented and communicated to the licensee in the IP 35007 inspection report(s). The determination will also be documented in the first assessment report issued following this determination. The criteria for making a determination of CAP adequacy are:

- a. the licensee has established an adequate program,
- b. the licensee has demonstrated the ability to adequately identify and document problems (indicated by the lack of greater-than-green findings involving failure to identify and document adverse conditions), and
- c. the licensee has demonstrated its ability to adequately correct problems and prevent recurrence (indicated by the lack of greater-than-green findings involving failure to take corrective action and prevent recurrence).

If a licensee's CAP implementation performance degrades, then it will be necessary to evaluate the extent of the degradation to determine if issuing NCVs for NRC-identified and self-revealing violations remains appropriate. This decision will be made based on the nature of identified issues that indicate a significant degradation of the licensee's CAP. The staff expects that if the identified issues are significant, then the staff will have identified greater-than-green findings associated with the CAP. Therefore, the issuance of a yellow finding against the licensee's CAP will be considered one indicator that the program has sufficiently degraded such that reverting to issuing Notices of Violations (NOVs) for all NRC-identified and self-revealing violations is appropriate. If the decision is reached to revert to issuing NOVs for these violations, then it should be communicated to the licensee as part of the assessment of licensee performance (e.g.,

EXHIBIT 1 – Reactor Construction Assessment Process Activities

Level of Review	Frequency/ Timing	Participants (* indicates chairperson)	Desired Outcome	Communication
Continuous	Continuous	SRI, RI, regional inspectors, CAEB	Performance awareness	None required, notify licensee by an Assessment Follow-Up letter <u>only</u> if thresholds crossed.
Quarterly	Once per quarter/ Five weeks after end of quarter	DCP: BC*, PE, SRI, RI, CAEB	Input/verify inspection data, detect early trends	Update data set, notify licensee by an Assessment Follow-Up letter <u>only</u> if thresholds crossed.
Mid-Cycle	At mid-cycle/ Seven weeks after end of second quarter	DRAC, DCI or DCP DD*, DCP and DCI BCs, principal inspectors, CAEB, HQ offices as appropriate.	Detect trends, plan inspection	Mid-cycle letter with an inspection plan of approximately 6 months.
End-of-Cycle	At end-of-cycle/ Seven weeks after end of assessment cycle	DRAC, DCI or DCP DD*, DCP and DCI BCs, principal inspectors, CAEB, HQ offices as appropriate.	Assessment of plant performance, oversight and coordination of regional actions	Annual assessment letter with an inspection plan of approximately 6 months.
End-of-Cycle Summary Meeting	The End-of-Cycle Summary Meeting will be scheduled within one week after the completion of the last end-of-cycle review	DIR NRO, RA or DRAC, DIR DCIP, other HQ offices as appropriate.	Summarize results of the end-of-cycle review	Information to be discussed at Agency Action Review Meeting.
Agency Action Review Meeting	Annually/ Several weeks after issuance of the annual assessment letters	EDO*, Office Directors, Regional Administrators, other senior agency managers as assigned.	Review of the appropriateness of agency actions	Commission briefing, followed by public meetings with individual licensees to discuss assessment results, as appropriate.

EXHIBIT 2 - Construction Action Matrix

		Licensee Response Column	Regulatory Response Column	Degraded Cornerstone Column	Multiple/ Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone Column	Unacceptable Performance Column
RESULTS		All Inspection Findings Green; Cornerstone Objectives Fully Met	One or Two White Findings (in different cornerstones) in a Strategic Performance Area; Cornerstone Objectives Fully Met	One Degraded Cornerstone (2 White Findings or 1 Yellow Finding) or any 3 White Findings in a Strategic Performance Area; Cornerstone Objectives Met with Moderate Degradation in Safety Performance	Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone, Multiple Degraded Cornerstones, Multiple Yellow Findings, or 1 Red Finding; Cornerstone Objectives Met with Longstanding Issues or Significant Degradation in Safety Performance	Overall Unacceptable Performance; Construction Suspended in the Area of Concern
RESPONSE	Regulatory Performance Meeting	None	BC or DD Meet with Licensee	RA/DRAC (or Designee) Meet with Senior Licensee Management.	EDO/DEDO (or Designee) meet with Senior Licensee Management	EDO/DEDO (or Designee) Meet with Senior Licensee Management
	Licensee Action	Licensee Corrective Action	Licensee Root cause Evaluation and corrective action with NRC Oversight	Licensee cumulative root cause evaluation with NRC Oversight	Licensee Performance Improvement Plan with NRC Oversight	Licensee Performance Improvement Plan / Construction Restart Plan with NRC Oversight
	NRC Inspection	Risk-Informed Baseline Inspection Program	Baseline and supplemental inspection procedure 90001	Baseline and supplemental inspection procedure 90002	Baseline and supplemental inspection procedure 90003	Baseline and Supplemental as Practicable, Plus Special Inspections per Construction Restart Checklist.
	Regulatory Actions ²	None	Supplemental inspection only	Supplemental inspection only Plant Discussed at AARM if Conditions Met	-10 CFR 2.204 DFI -10 CFR 50.54(f) Letter - CAL/Order Plant Discussed at AARM	Order to Modify, Suspend, or Revoke Licensed Activities Plant Discussed at AARM
COMMUNICATION	Assessment Letters	BC or DD review/sign assessment report (w/ inspection plan)	DD review/sign assessment report (w/ inspection plan)	DRAC review/sign assessment report (w/ inspection plan)	RA review/sign assessment report (w/ inspection plan)	RA review/sign assessment report (w/ inspection plan)
	Annual Involvement of Public Stakeholders	Various public stakeholder options (see section 12) involving the SRI or BC	Various public stakeholder options (see section 12) involving the BC or DD	RA/DRAC (or Designee) Discuss Performance with Senior Licensee Management	EDO/DEDO (or Designee) Discuss Performance with Senior Licensee Management	EDO/DEDO (or Designee) Discuss Performance with Senior Licensee Management
	Commission involvement	None	None	Possible Commission Meeting if Licensee Remains for one and one half years	Commission Meeting with Senior Licensee Management Within 6 mo.	Commission Meeting with Senior Licensee Management
	INCREASING SAFETY SIGNIFICANCE ----->					

ATTACHMENT 1 - ACRONYMS

AARM	Agency Action Review Meeting
AV	Apparent Violation
BC	Branch Chief
CAEB	Construction Assessment, Enforcement, and Allegations Branch
CAL	Confirmatory Action Letter
CAM	Construction Action Matrix
CAP	Corrective Action Program
CCI	Center for Construction Inspection
CIP	Construction Inspection Program
CIPIMS	Construction Inspection Program Information Management System
COL	Combined License
cROP	Construction Reactor Oversight Process
cSCCI	Construction Substantive Cross-cutting Issue
CY	Calendar Year
DCI	Division of Construction Inspection
DCIP	Division of Construction Inspection and Operational Programs
DCP	Division of Construction Projects
DD	Division Director
DEDO	Deputy Executive Director for Operations
DFI	Demand for Information
DIR	Director
DNRL	Division of New Reactor Licensing
DRAC	Deputy Regional Administrator for Construction
EDO	Executive Director for Operations
FIN	Finding
HQ	Headquarters
IMC	Inspection Manual Chapter
IP	Inspection Procedure
ITAAC	Inspections, Tests, Analyses, and Acceptance Criteria
NCVs	Noncited Violations
NRC	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
NRO	Office of New Reactors
NSIR	Office of Nuclear Safety and Incident Response
OE	Office of Enforcement
OI	Office of Investigations
PE	Project Engineer
QA	Quality Assurance
RA	Regional Administrator
RES	Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research
RI	Resident Inspector
ROP	Reactor Oversight Process

SCWE	Safety Conscious Work Environment
SDP	Significance Determination Process
SRI	Senior Resident Inspector
URIs	Unresolved Items
VIO	Violation

ATTACHMENT 2 - Revision History for IMC 2505P

Commitment Tracking Number	Issue Date	Description of Change	Training Required	Training Completion Date	Comment Resolution Accession Number
N/A	12/21/11 CN 042 ML112700780	Complete revision to address Commission direction in SRM SECY 2010-0140	None	N/A	ML112700797