Reactor Oversight Process Enhancement Project
Baseline Inspection Program
Inspection Area – Licensed Operator Requalification Program and Licensed Operator Performance

Background

Inspection Procedure (IP) 71111.11, "Licensed Operator Requalification Program and Licensed Operator Performance," addresses the Initiating Events, Mitigating Systems, Barrier Integrity, and Emergency Preparedness Reactor Oversight Process (ROP) Cornerstones and is intended to evaluate: (1) licensed operator performance, (2) the ability of facility licensees to identify and correct problems associated with licensed operator performance, and (3) aspects of facility licensees' licensed operator requalification programs. A sound licensed operator requalification program, including such elements as properly administering quality examinations, meeting medical requirements for licensed operators, and properly maintaining the control room simulator, is essential to maintaining the competence of licensed operators. Poor operator performance can affect plant risk due to human errors, which can cause initiating events or result in incorrect or untimely mitigating actions during an event.

In December of 2011, a complete rewrite to IP 71111.11 was completed which addressed numerous inspector concerns that had accrued over the years, including the lack of concise assessment tools. In addition, as a part of the rewrite, four hours per calendar quarter were added for the resident staff to observe licensed operator performance in the plant's main control room.

Analysis

The regional, resident and headquarters inspectors and examiners provided feedback on suggested changes to the baseline inspection procedure, primarily focused on any difficulties that have been encountered since the rewrite was issued. Other areas discussed with internal stakeholders included enhancing flexibility, and adjusting inspection requirements to increase the focus of inspection onto more risk significant activities.

Recommendations

In general, the regions, residents, and examiners are satisfied with the 2011 rewrite of IP 71111.11, and that the rewrite was a significant improvement over the previous version. However, two recommendations to improve the IP have been developed:

1.   Consider changing the 4 hours per calendar quarter of control room observations to 16 hours per year and 4 different plant evolutions. This would add flexibility and potentially allow more risk significant activities to be observed given that riskier activities may all occur in one calendar quarter (e.g., startup, shutdown, and outage activities).

Champion: Ho K. Nieh, NRR/DIRS
Key Staff: David S. Muller, NRR/DIRS

2.   Improve and clarify some of the assessment tools that have been troublesome for regional examiners to implement, including tools associated with examination failure rates, re-examination failure rates, and assessing simulator scenario quality.