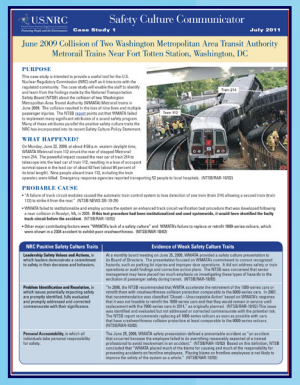
OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

NRC staff continues to provide outreach and education on the importance of a positive safety culture through presentations at various conferences, participation in workshops, and discussions with stakeholders during inspections and public meetings. In addition, the NRC has developed various educational tools to aid in understanding the Safety Culture Policy Statement and the importance of a positive safety culture. These tools include case studies highlighting how the safety culture traits apply to real events and documenting the journey that organizations have taken to improve their safety culture.


U.S.NRC Safety Culture Communicator

Case Study 1 July 2011

June 2009 Collision of Two Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Metrorail Trains Near Fort Totten Station, Washington, DC

PURPOSE

WHAT HAPPENED

PROBABLE CAUSE

NRC Positive Safety Culture Traits	Evidence of Weak Safety Culture Traits
Leadership Safety Values and Actions, in which all individuals demonstrate a commitment to safety in their decisions and behaviors.	At a monthly board meeting on June 25, 2009, WMATA provided a safety culture presentation to the Board of Directors. The WMATA safety culture presentation focused on employee slips, trips, and falls hazards, such as parking lot injuries and improper door operations. It did not address safety or train operations or audit findings and corrective action plans. The NTSB was concerned that senior management was not aware of the safety culture issues that contributed to three types of hazards to the exclusion of passenger safety during transit. (NTSB/RAR-10/02)
Problem Identification and Resolution, in which issues potentially impacting safety are promptly identified, fully evaluated, and addressed and corrected commensurate with their significance.	"In 2006, the NTSB recommended that WMATA accelerate the retirement of the 1000-series cars or retrofit them with crashworthiness collision protection comparable to the 5000-series cars. In 2007, that recommendation was classified "Closed—Unacceptable Action" based on WMATA's response that the 1000-series cars would be retired by the end of 2014. However, the schedule for the replacement with the 7000-series cars in 2014," as originally planned. (NTSB/RAR-10/02) This issue was classified and evaluated but not addressed or corrected commensurate with the potential risk. The NTSB was concerned that WMATA did not have a plan to retrofit the 1000-series cars to have crashworthiness collision protection at least comparable to the 5000-series cars. (NTSB/RAR-10/02)
Personal Accountability, in which all individuals take personal responsibility for safety.	The June 22, 2006, WMATA safety presentation defined a preventable accident as "an accident that could have been avoided because the employee failed to do everything reasonable expected of a trained professional to avoid involvement in an accident." (NTSB/RAR-10/02) Based on this definition, NTSB concluded that "WMATA placed much of the blame for causing each bunch of the responsibility for preventing accidents on frontline employees. Placing blame on frontline employees is not likely to improve the safety of the system as a whole." (NTSB/RAR-10/02)

The NRC also has a publication called "Trait Talk" that describes each safety culture trait in more detail, including why each trait is important, examples of attitudes and behaviors that apply to each trait, and an illustrative scenario showing how each trait could play a role in organizational events. Trait Talk and other educational tools are available for download from the NRC's safety culture Web page (http://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/safety-culture.html).

U.S.NRC SAFETY CULTURE

TRAIT TALK

Issue 1 March, 2011

Leadership Safety Values and Actions

One of the traits of a positive safety culture as described in the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Safety Culture Policy Statement.

What Is The Definition Of Leadership Safety Values And Actions?

Why Is This Trait Important?

Each Trait Talk includes a fictional concerns based on a different licensee or commercial. The concerns in Trait Talk #1 are based on the reactor community.

As you read through Trait Talk, consider the following questions:

1. How does this trait apply to my organization?
2. Are there other attributes and examples that better fit my organization?
3. What impact does this trait have on the safety culture of my organization?
4. How does the increase in understanding of the safety culture in my organization?
5. How could I improve the performance of this trait in my organization?

Interactions between NRC staff and stakeholders about safety culture are an important part of the success of the policy statement. These interactions increase awareness of the importance of safety culture and help individuals and organizations develop an understanding of how they can foster and maintain a positive safety culture in their work environments.

NRC MISSION

The mission of the NRC is to license and regulate the Nation's civilian use of byproduct, source, and special nuclear materials to protect public health and safety, promote the common defense and security, and protect the environment.

This brochure was adapted from the NRC's Final Safety Culture Policy Statement, published in the Federal Register on June 14, 2011 (76 FR 34773).

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO:
http://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/safety-culture.html

FOR FEEDBACK AND QUESTIONS, SEND E-MAIL TO:
external_safety_culture.resource@nrc.gov

NUREG/BR-0500, Rev. 3
March 2015

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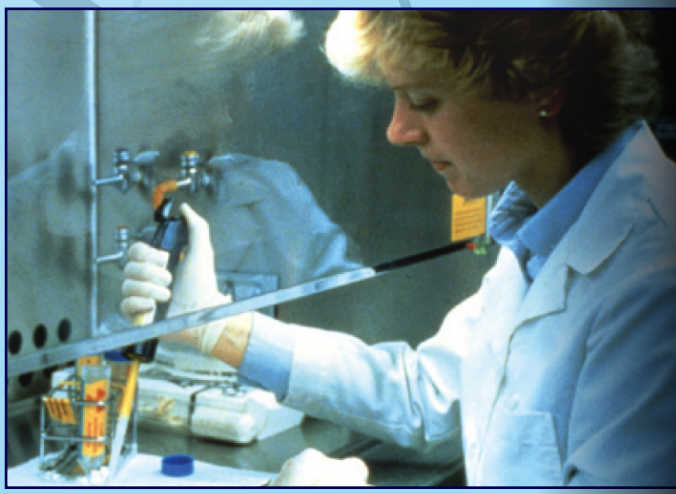
U.S.NRC
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Protecting People and the Environment

SAFETY CULTURE
Policy Statement



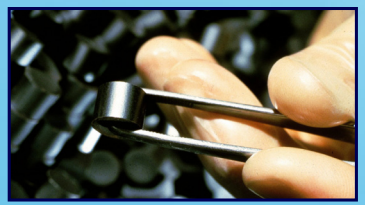
SAFETY CULTURE POLICY STATEMENT

The Safety Culture Policy Statement sets forth the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) expectation that individuals and organizations performing regulated activities establish and maintain a positive safety culture commensurate with the safety and security significance of their activities and the nature and complexity of their organizations and functions.

This policy statement applies to all licensees, certificate holders, permit holders, authorization holders, holders of quality assurance program approvals, vendors and suppliers of safety-related components, and applicants for a license, certificate, permit, authorization, or quality assurance program approval subject to NRC authority. In addition, the Commission encourages the Agreement States (States that assume regulatory authority over their own use of certain nuclear materials), their licensees, and other organizations interested in nuclear safety to support the development and maintenance of a positive safety culture within their regulated communities.

CONSIDERATION OF SAFETY AND SECURITY

Because safety and security are the primary pillars of the NRC's regulatory mission, consideration of both is an underlying principle of the Safety Culture Policy Statement. Organizations should ensure that personnel in the safety and security sectors appreciate the importance of each, emphasizing the need for integration and balance to achieve both safety and security in their activities.



DEFINITION OF NUCLEAR SAFETY CULTURE

Nuclear safety culture is the core values and behaviors resulting from a collective commitment by leaders and individuals to emphasize safety over competing goals to ensure protection of people and the environment.

TRAITS OF A POSITIVE NUCLEAR SAFETY CULTURE

Experience has shown that certain personal and organizational traits are present in a positive safety culture. The following are traits of a positive safety culture:

Leadership Safety Values and Actions
Leaders demonstrate a commitment to safety in their decisions and behaviors.

Problem Identification and Resolution
Issues potentially impacting safety are promptly identified, fully evaluated, and promptly addressed and corrected commensurate with their significance.

Personal Accountability
All individuals take personal responsibility for safety.

Work Processes
The process of planning and controlling work activities is implemented so that safety is maintained.

Continuous Learning
Opportunities to learn about ways to ensure safety are sought out and implemented.

Environment for Raising Concerns
A safety conscious work environment is maintained where personnel feel free to raise safety concerns without fear of retaliation, intimidation, harassment, or discrimination.

Effective Safety Communication
Communications maintain a focus on safety.

Respectful Work Environment
Trust and respect permeate the organization.

Questioning Attitude
Individuals avoid complacency and continuously challenge existing conditions and activities in order to identify discrepancies that might result in error or inappropriate action.

There may be additional traits not included here that are also important in a positive safety culture. For instance, decision-making is included as a trait in the safety culture common language for the nuclear power industry (NUREG-2165, "Safety Culture Common Language").

BACKGROUND

The 1986 nuclear accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in the Ukraine revealed the impact that weaknesses in safety culture can have on safety. Since then, the influence of safety culture has been further demonstrated by a number of significant events in the United States and internationally. Assessments of these events revealed that safety culture weaknesses were an underlying cause or increased the severity of problems.

The NRC addressed aspects of safety culture in two previously issued policy statements. The "Policy Statement on the Conduct of Nuclear Power Plant Operations," (published in 1989) states the NRC's expectations that licensed operators and managers of nuclear power plants conduct themselves professionally to ensure safety. In 1996, the NRC published "Freedom of Employees in the Nuclear Industry to Raise Safety Concerns without Fear of Retaliation," a policy statement that applies to the regulated activities of all NRC licensees and their contractors. It provides the expectation that licensees and employers subject to NRC authority establish and maintain work environments where employees feel free to raise safety concerns without fear of retaliation (referred to as a safety conscious work environment).

IMPORTANCE FOR REGULATED ENTITIES

Industry experience has shown the value of establishing and maintaining a positive safety culture. It is important to remember that individuals and organizations performing regulated activities bear the primary responsibility for safety and security. The Safety Culture Policy Statement is not a regulation; therefore, it is the regulated entities' responsibility to consider how to apply this policy statement to its regulated activities.