



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

July 3, 2023

MEMORANDUM TO: Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards Business Lines
and Regional Administrators

FROM: John W. Lubinski, Director
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. Lubinski".

Signed by Lubinski, John
on 07/03/23

SUBJECT: OFFICE OF NUCLEAR MATERIAL SAFETY AND SAFEGUARDS
IMPLEMENTATION OF VERY LOW SAFETY SIGNIFICANCE ISSUE
RESOLUTION PROCESS

The purpose of this memorandum is to share with you the results of a review conducted by an agencywide working group (WG) formed to consider application of the very low safety significance issue resolution (VLSSIR) process to Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards (NMSS) business lines. The WG's recommendations to implement VLSSIR in NMSS can be found in the WG's report at (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System [ADAMS] Accession No. ML22353A599). I endorse the recommendations, and greatly appreciate the leadership and support from your staff who contributed to this important effort that will enable the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission to consistently apply VLSSIR across its various business lines.

Implementing the VLSSIR process in the materials inspection program will help us maintain consistency with inspection efforts across the agency and enhance the decision-making tools available to inspectors. The VLSSIR process is used to discontinue inspection of unresolved licensing basis questions that cannot be resolved without a significant level of effort, and that are of low enough safety significance that they would be screened as Severity Level IV in the enforcement process (if the issue were ultimately determined to be a noncompliance). While the VLSSIR process applies the flexibility we have always had in the inspection program, it is not a process for disregarding known compliance issues or issues where there is a clear indication that a noncompliance occurred. Inspectors should follow the existing processes for screening and dispositioning these compliance related issues.

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The enclosure to this memorandum provides interim guidance to be applied to NMSS business line Inspection Manual Chapters (IMC) for implementation of the VLSSIR process, until such time as the IMCs are updated. Additionally, NMSS staff will make some changes to Web-Based Licensing to facilitate VLSSIR implementation.

As part of this roll out, the WG will provide multiple means of communicating the implementation of VLSSIR process for NMSS business lines. This includes but is not limited to pop-up seminars; regional seminars; public meetings with stakeholders, and marketing via the One NMSS Teams Channel. Further, the WG would be available to provide support for VLSSIR implementation.

I encourage you to share and have a dialogue on this memorandum with your staff.

Enclosure:
NMSS VLSSIR WG Report and
Implementation Guidance