



BACKGROUND

Office of Public Affairs

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Realizing Efficiencies in the Reactor Oversight Process

Recognizing 25 years of safe operations under the Reactor Oversight Process, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission voted March 25, 2026, to adopt a leaner, more risk-focused oversight framework. Combined with efficiencies implemented in 2025 and others proposed for the NRC's security inspection program, [these changes](#) reduce ROP baseline inspection hours by 38%, reflecting improved industry performance, advances in technology, and direction from the bipartisan ADVANCE Act and Executive Order 14300.

The NRC's top-to-bottom review found long-term, clear evidence that the operating fleet's performance has improved since the ROP was first implemented in 2000. It identified several areas requiring significant inspection resources that result in very few findings or safety benefits. Licensees have implemented strong operational practices in programs such as emergency preparedness, radiation protection, and security. This performance warrants a reduction in regulatory burden that will not compromise the effectiveness of the NRC's oversight. The changes also reflect input from internal and external stakeholders collected throughout the ROP comprehensive review process.

Focus on What Matters Most for Safety

Resident inspectors will continue to be the agency's essential eyes and ears, overseeing safety at reactor sites. The two resident inspectors at each operating nuclear power plant will be performing more targeted baseline inspections, contributing to some of the reduction in the size and frequency of multi-disciplinary regional inspections. By implementing a more flexible, targeted approach to regional involvement, the NRC can maintain its robust boots-on-the-ground site presence while lowering travel and staffing requirements.

Impact on Licensees

Certain licensee responsibilities will not change. They will still be responsible for safety and required to correct all non-compliances. Changes to the process for assessing the significance of NRC findings will mean fewer documented findings of very low safety significance. Licensees who demonstrate improved or sustained high performance will have a lower overall burden as inspections are consolidated in the areas of engineering, emergency preparedness, and radiation protection. When document reviews and staff interviews are sufficient, inspections will be done remotely. Licensees should expect less redundancy in requirements for document production, interviews, walkthroughs, demonstrations and drills.

This new structure will ensure inspection activities return maximum value by focusing on areas with credible risks or demonstrated safety significance while trimming inspections in areas where decades of high-performance data show risks are very low.

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