

RIC 2005

Session F-1

ROP / Inspection Program

Top Three Challenges /Solutions for CY2005

Stuart Richards, Chief

Inspection Program Branch - NRR

Nuclear Regulatory Commission

March 8, 2005



Challenge #1 - Inspection of Safety Culture

- Safety Culture can be a leading indicator of poor performance and is therefore an important regulatory element.
- The challenge is in how to incorporate a relatively subjective area into the ROP, a program that is largely built on objectivity criteria

Solution #1 - Inspection of Safety Culture

- On 8/30/04, the Commission directed the staff to enhance the ROP treatment of cross-cutting issues to more fully address Safety Culture.
- The staff has formed a working group led by the Office of Enforcement to address the Commission tasking.
- The staff will internally discuss lessons learned from recent experience in the Safety Culture area and assess whether program revisions are warranted based on this experience.

Challenge #2 - Focus of Inspection Resources

- Is the NRC inspection program looking in the right areas and are the inspection resources properly balanced?
- Are the Performance Indicators correctly focused?

Solution #2 - Focus of Inspection Resources

- The staff annually assesses the effectiveness of the ROP. This assessment includes input from the Regions, the industry, and from public stakeholders.
- NRC has recently focused on industry operating experience in a more disciplined manner.
- The staff will consider operating experience, comments from our stakeholders, and the results of past inspections, and then revise the baseline inspection program accordingly.
- The staff and industry are working on revisions to several Performance Indicators.

Challenge #3 - Excessive Resources Spent on the Assessment Process

- Excessive Resources Spent on the Assessment Process
 - Significance Determination Process
 - Performance Indicators

Challenge #3 - Excessive Resources Spent on Assessment Process (cont)

- To be effective:
 - deficiencies in licensee performance must be fed back into the oversight process in a timely manner
 - Taking more than a few months to do this
 - defeats the intent of the program
 - reduces public confidence in NRC performance
 - frustrates the NRC staff.
- The extensive use of resources to assess inspection finding significance and to answer PI Frequently Asked Questions is not a good use of resources.

Solution # 3 - Excessive Resources Spent on the Assessment Process

- The staff is assessing potential changes to the Significance Determination Process to make the process more timely and less resource intensive.
- A process has been put in place to resolve frequently asked questions (FAQ's) when an agreement cannot be reached between the staff and the industry at the monthly working meetings.