



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

April 21, 2015

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Burns
Commissioner Svinicki
Commissioner Ostendorff
Commissioner Baran

FROM: Catherine Haney, Director */RA/ SMOORE for CHaney*
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

SUBJECT: NATIONAL MATERIALS PROGRAM TRAINING
ENHANCEMENTS

In Staff Requirement Memorandum (SRM) - Annual Meeting with Organization of Agreement States (OAS) and the Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors (CRCPD) dated April 24, 2014 (SRM-M140410B), the staff was directed to work with OAS/CRCPD to explore opportunities for providing training that may increase effectiveness and reduce cost and report back to the Commission on the results of this effort. This memorandum summarizes the staff's efforts to increase training opportunities in order for States to increase effectiveness and reduce costs.

Topical Webinars

Since 2012, staff has solicited feedback from Agreement States on specific topics for short seminars (2 to 3 hours) that would be beneficial to their programs. Since 2013, the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards (NMSS), Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO)/Technical Training Center (TTC) and regional staff have presented eight seminars online (webinars) using a web-based conference tool. Topics included performance based inspections, gap training for inspecting against the new Part 37 requirements, medical inspection techniques, safety culture, and permanent brachytherapy.

The use of webinars allows the training of a large number of personnel at one time and requires no travel on the part of the trainers or the participants. Due to the success of this initiative and positive feedback from the Agreement States, staff plans to continue conducting the webinars.

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New Innovative Approach to Training: Convert U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Classroom Training to Blended or Online courses

Since 2013, the TTC has been planning innovative methods to conduct health physics (HP) training courses. The methods involve using different modalities for delivering the course presentations while also bringing some courses in-house that were previously taught by contractors, to be taught by NRC instructors. Previously, all of the HP training courses offered to the Agreement States required travel to a facility with a classroom and/or lab for traditional, instructor-led training (ILT). By converting the course presentations into online modules, the classroom portions of multiple courses can be completed without requiring travel. New HP training laboratories were designed and constructed at the TTC to support blended courses and to allow the course to be taught by NRC HP staff. The first HP course to undergo this transition was the Fundamental Health Physics course (H-122). This 2-week course previously required at least 13 days of lodging and per diem at contractor's facility. Future offerings of the H-122 course as a blended learning course will only require 5 days of lodging and per diem. The first offering of this course is scheduled in June 2015.

The TTC is currently converting the Intermediate Health Physics course (H-123) to a blended learning style that will also use the TTC's new lab facilities. Additional courses have been identified and are being evaluated for future transition to blended or online training.

As more courses are converted to online modules, staff expects that future course conversions will require fewer resources. Some converted modules can be used in portions of other technical courses that have already been converted to online or blended learning. Additionally, now that these courses are taught by TTC instructors, more offerings can be made available to the Agreement States, as needed, since there are no contract limitations.

At the 2014 OAS Annual Meeting in Chicago, the TTC presented the plans for the HP Fundamentals blended course and solicited Agreement States to help with reviewing the modules of the new course. In addition to the presentation, the TTC's poster display session at the meeting provided opportunities to interact with the States and discuss their training needs. TTC will be making presentations on blended courses in 2015 at the annual meetings of CRCPD and OAS.

Training Enhancements Continue to be Promoted

1. Encourage States to using NRC Contractors

Agreement States with a critical training need can procure training directly from NRC contractors who are currently providing the training under contracts managed by the TTC. Because the training materials are already developed, Agreement States can procure the services directly from the contractors at reduced costs. The TTC allows the use of these previously developed training materials by Agreement States.

The State of California has contracted with an NRC training contractor to conduct the irradiator training course in California in August 2015. California employees are prohibited from foreign travel (the NRC irradiator course is taught at facilities in Canada), so this arrangement will

provide California personnel with previously unavailable training. A portion of the irradiator course is taught by NRC staff.

2. Train Agreement States to Provide their own Training

Some Agreement States have expressed interest in using NRC materials to teach their own staff. This approach will work for courses that are taught by NRC technical staff such as the Inspection Procedures and Licensing Procedures training courses. This may require support from an NRC region, NMSS, and the TTC for the first offering. For subsequent offerings, the Agreement States would be able to provide their own training with minimal support from the NRC. The State of Texas plans to hold the Inspection Procedures class for its staff with NRC regional and TTC staff support this year.

3. Course Mobility

As needs have been identified and as funding has allowed, additional course sessions have been added to the NRC-sponsored training schedule to accommodate the backlog of requesting Agreement States. Several Agreement States have volunteered to host NRC-sponsored courses that are mobile (can be taught at alternate locations). This has helped the hosting States gain additional training slots for their personnel for the particular course and reduced travel cost for NRC. Later this year, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania plans to host the Inspection Procedures class with NRC regional staff support, and offer the class to other States. The Agreement States have been very appreciative of the NRC's flexibility in holding a course in an Agreement State. There may be more opportunities to host some courses in Agreement States when there is high demand and the Agreement State can provide training facilities.

4. Prioritize training seats

The selection process for training courses is equitable and makes the most efficient use of NRC travel and training funds. Staff identifies Agreement State staff that have the greatest need for training in order to qualify as materials inspectors and license reviewers. There has also been increased coordination with the Regional State Agreement Officers and the Agreement States to identify those individuals with the greatest needs for training.

NRC and State Coordination

In April 2013, a complete revision of the training and qualifications of materials inspectors and license reviewers was completed by an NRC/Agreement State Working Group. Inspection Manual Chapter (IMC) 1248 was issued and provided to the Agreement States. The new IMC places a greater emphasis on on-the-job training and the completion of individual study activities. The NRC staff serves as a resource for the CRCPD Training Committee along with Federal, State and industry representatives to develop training modules for categories of radioactive materials licensees. Joint NRC and Agreement State coordination on these important training initiatives have resulted in widely accepted and used reference documents.

Summary

One of the strengths of the National Materials Program (NMP) is the common training program used by the NRC and the Agreement States to train and qualify materials inspectors and license reviewers. Agreement States and OAS routinely point out the value and importance of the NRC training program in implementing their regulatory programs. Results of Integrated Materials Performance Evaluation Program (IMPEP) reviews of Agreement States and NRC regional programs over the years have demonstrated that proper staff training leads to inspection and licensing programs that are protective of public health and safety.

The migration towards more use of online or blended learning courses will continue. Staff will continue to assess the quality of the learning tools used by the NRC and Agreement States' students to ensure that the training content provided is effective.

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