

## U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVE (MD)

MD 8.2		NRC INCIDENT RESPONSE PROGRAM		DT-17-157	
Volume 8:		Licensee Oversight Programs			
Approved By:		Mark A. Satorius Executive Director for Operations			
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Cert. Date:		N/A, for the latest version of any NRC directive or handbook, see the <a href="#">online MD Catalog</a> .			
Issuing Office:		Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response Division of Preparedness and Response			
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<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>					
Directive and Handbook 8.2 are revised to inform employees of the essential elements of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Incident Response Program (IRP) and describe how the NRC assists, commits staff, and manages the response to incidents and emergencies involving nuclear and radiological facilities or materials licensed or regulated by the NRC.					

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## I. POLICY

### A. Response to Incidents

It is the policy of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission to be prepared to respond to incidents and emergencies involving nuclear and radiological facilities or materials licensed or regulated by the NRC in accordance with rules in Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR), "Energy," and the Reorganization Plan Number 1 of 1980.

### B. NRC Commitment

Within its statutory responsibilities and authority, the NRC has committed to meeting the requirements of Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5), "Management of Domestic Incidents," and coordinating and supporting the NRC responsibilities identified in the National Response Framework (NRF) and its associated annexes.

## II. OBJECTIVES

- Ensure that the NRC's response to safety and security incidents is consistent with the national response strategy identified in the National Incident Management System as maintained by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) (<http://www.fema.gov/national-incident-management-system>).
- Ensure that the NRC meets its obligations and responsibilities as prescribed by the NRF and its associated annexes.

- Identify the NRC’s incident response program, managed by the Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response (NSIR), that will commit staff and manage the NRC response to incidents and emergencies involving nuclear and radiological facilities or materials licensed or regulated by the NRC.
- Ensure that the NRC response to incidents and emergencies involving nuclear and radiological facilities or materials licensed or regulated by the NRC is consistent with the NRC mission; compatible with licensee responsibilities; supportive of the emergency response functions of State, local, and Tribal governments; and coordinated with the responses of other Federal organizations with emergency response responsibilities.

### **III. ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND DELEGATIONS OF AUTHORITY**

#### **A. The Chairman**

1. The Chairman, as the principal executive officer of the agency, is responsible for:
  - (a) Acting as the spokesman of the agency; developing policy planning and guidance for consideration by the Commission;
  - (b) Ensuring that the Executive Director for Operations (EDO) and staff are responsive to requirements of the Commission in the performance of its functions; and
  - (c) Determining the use and expenditure of funds in accordance with the purposes approved by the Commission.
2. Section 3 of Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1980 states that the Chairman may assume all functions vested in the Commission pertaining to an emergency concerning a facility or materials licensed by the agency including, declaring, responding, issuing orders, determining specific policies, advising civil authorities and the public, and directing and coordinating actions relative to the emergency incident. In accordance with the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, the Chairman shall notify the other members of the Commission, the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate, not later than 1 day after the Chairman begins performing functions under the authority of Section 3 of Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1980.

#### **B. The Commission**

The Commission is responsible for policy formulation, rulemaking, and orders and adjudications.

**C. Executive Director for Operations (EDO)**

1. Oversees the NRC Incident Response Program (IRP).
2. Ensures the cooperation and support of NRC offices in providing staff for training (including exercises and special projects) and responding to incidents and emergencies involving facilities and materials licensed or regulated by the NRC.
3. Provides qualified personnel to serve on the Headquarters Operations Center (HOC) incident response teams or as liaison representatives for response to an incident and to support interagency response activities, as appropriate.

**D. Director, Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA)**

1. Provides qualified personnel to serve on the HOC incident response teams.
2. Supports training and exercise participation for incident response team members.
3. Keeps congressional contacts informed of NRC actions during an incident response and responds to congressional questions.
4. Supports Chairman and other senior officials on phone calls and briefings with congressional contacts.

**E. Director, Office of Public Affairs (OPA)**

1. Provides qualified personnel to serve on the HOC incident response teams or as liaison representatives for response to an incident and to support interagency response activities, as appropriate.
2. Responds to information requests from the news media, creates written products, and provides direction to staff serving on the Public Inquiry Desk during incidents generating significant public interest.
3. Supports training and exercise participation for incident response team members.
4. Maintains the capability, in conjunction with DPR, the Office of Administration (ADM), and the Office of Information Services (OIS), of the NRC News Center, which will be activated to support a surge in OPA related functions during an event response. Manages the NRC News Center once it is activated.
5. Implements an appropriate incident communications strategy to coordinate with other Federal communications efforts.
6. Ensures that NRC senior managers are aware of the content of media coverage and when practical, provides information regarding press materials from other organizations, including licensee, States, and other Federal agencies.

7. Keeps news media informed of NRC actions and coordinates with other public information organizations.
8. Uses social media tools to communicate incident information to the public.
9. Initiates, as appropriate, an emergency event Web page.

**F. Inspector General, Office of the Inspector General (OIG)**

1. Provides qualified personnel, as determined by the Inspector General, who may participate as observers during the response to an incident.
2. Provides computer forensic or law enforcement officer assistance, as requested.

**G. General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel (OGC)**

1. Provides qualified personnel to participate in training of incident investigation and augmented inspection teams.
2. Provides qualified personnel to provide legal advice during incidents, incident investigations, and augmented inspections, as requested.

**H. Director, Office of International Programs (OIP)**

1. Provides qualified personnel to serve on the HOC incident response teams or as liaison representatives for response to an incident and to support interagency response activities, as appropriate.
2. Supports training and exercise participation for incident response team members.
3. Assists the Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response (NSIR), Division of Preparedness and Response (DPR), in arranging periodic incident response meetings with Canada and Mexico.
4. Interacts with the U.S. Department of State on incident response issues.
5. Coordinates incident response activities with the International Atomic Energy Agency and other international organizations.

**I. Director, Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response (NSIR)**

1. Directs the IRP as implemented by DPR.
2. Provides programmatic guidance, policies, plans, requirements, and procedures necessary to ensure a standardized IRP.
3. Develops and maintains the Information Assessment Team (IAT) to assess the credibility of threats and informs and coordinates with the Department of Homeland Security and other appropriate agencies.

4. Represents the NRC as the safeguards and security contact with DHS, the Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and intelligence and law enforcement communities on counterterrorism and IAT activities.
5. Provides classified telecommunications, intelligence support, and security advice and assistance in response to security incidents.
6. Designates the Director, DPR, as the NSIR representative at Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Federal Radiological Preparedness Coordinating Committee (FRPCC) meetings and coordinates appropriate participation by other offices.
7. Provides qualified personnel to serve on the HOC incident response teams or as liaison representatives for response to an incident and to support interagency response activities, as appropriate.
8. Notifies OIG when the NRC's response posture transitions to the Activation or Expanded Activation mode.
9. Develops, directs, and implements the IRP commensurate with the NRC mission of protecting the public health and safety, the common defense and security, and the environment. This measure includes outreach elements to Federal, State, local, and Tribal organizations.
10. Develops, coordinates, implements, and performs routine assessments of staff training sessions, practice drills, and exercises to ensure the NRC maintains a high state of readiness to respond to incidents and emergencies involving nuclear or radiological facilities or materials licensed or regulated by the NRC.

**J. Director, Office of New Reactors (NRO)**

1. Provides qualified personnel to serve on the HOC incident response teams or as liaison representatives for response to an incident and to support interagency response activities, as appropriate.
2. Supports training and exercise participation for incident response team members.

**K. Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR)**

1. Provides qualified personnel to serve on the HOC incident response teams or as liaison representatives for response to an incident and to support interagency response activities, as appropriate.
2. Supports training and exercise participation for incident response team members.
3. Provides qualified personnel for the receipt of incident notifications during and outside of normal office hours.

**L. Director, Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research (RES)**

1. Provides qualified personnel to serve on the HOC incident response teams or as liaison representatives for response to an incident and to support interagency response activities, as appropriate.
2. Supports training and exercise participation for incident response team members.

**M. Director, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards (NMSS)**

1. Provides qualified personnel to serve on the HOC incident response teams or as liaison representatives for response to an incident and to support interagency response activities, as appropriate.
2. Supports training and exercise participation for incident response team members.
3. Provides qualified personnel for the receipt of incident notifications during and outside of normal office hours.
4. Assists NSIR, DPR, in implementation of the State outreach program to increase and improve the NRC's interactions with States during actual events, exercises, and briefings.
5. Designates an NMSS representative to represent NRC at FEMA FRPCC meetings on matters related to NRC Agreement State and Tribal activities.

**N. Director, Office of Information Services (OIS)**

1. Provides qualified personnel to serve on the HOC incident response teams and to support interagency response activities, as appropriate.
2. Supports training and exercise participation for incident response team members.
3. Provides infrastructure telecommunications and electronic information systems and support for the HOC and the NRC News Center.

**O. Director, Office of Administration (ADM)**

1. Provides day-to-day operations and maintenance of building equipment and systems for the HOC and the NRC News Center.
2. Provides qualified personnel to serve on the HOC incident response teams and to support interagency response activities, as appropriate.
3. Provides a security guard to the HOC to control access during incident response activities.
4. Supports training and exercise participation for incident response team members.

5. Represents the NRC to other Federal, State, local, and Tribal organizations and security and law enforcement organizations on matters pertaining to physical security at NRC facilities occupied by NRC employees and its contractors.

**P. Regional Administrators**

1. Manage and administer the regional elements of the IRP.
2. Maintain an effective regional incident response capability.
3. Maintain the capability to promptly staff the regional Incident Response Center (IRC).
4. Maintain functional regional IRC with regional base teams.
5. Select appropriate staff to serve as the regional site team.
6. Select staff members to serve as the dedicated regional emergency response coordinators.
7. Provide regional duty officers as the primary point of contact for receipt of incident notifications during and outside of normal office hours.
8. Provide qualified personnel to serve as team members for response to an incident and to support interagency response activities, as appropriate.
9. Provide training and support participation in exercises for incident response team members.
10. Manage the regional programs to provide potassium iodide to NRC resident inspectors, regional inspectors, regional site team members, and other NRC personnel who may respond to an incident site.
11. Support an outreach program for other regional Federal organizations to identify resources and develop working arrangements to support the NRC as a designated Federal Coordinating Agency (designated by the Nuclear/Radiological Incident Annex to the National Response Framework) in response to incidents and emergencies involving nuclear and radiological facilities or materials licensed or regulated by the NRC.
12. Support an outreach program for State, local, and Tribal organizations and licensees to assure they are aware of the resources of the NRC and other Federal organizations to support them during actual incidents and emergencies involving nuclear and radiological facilities or materials licensed or regulated by the NRC.
13. Support a program for staff to attend meetings of the Federal Radiological Monitoring and Assessment Center working groups, regional interagency steering committees, regional response teams, and other Federal agency meetings to integrate the NRC regional response with the response of other Federal organizations.



#### **IV. APPLICABILITY**

The policy and guidance in this MD and handbook apply to all NRC employees.

#### **V. DIRECTIVE HANDBOOK**

Handbook 8.2 describes the major components of the IRP, outlines the NRC incident response at headquarters and the regional offices, and provides general guidance.

#### **VI. PRIMARY MISSION ESSENTIAL FUNCTION IN THE NRC CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN**

- A.** As defined in the NRC's Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan, the NRC's Primary Mission Essential Function (PMEF) is to "continuously monitor licensees' operations, including the threat environment, and rapidly respond to safety or security-related events involving licensed facilities or associated materials." Inherent in this PMEF is the NRC commitment to—
1. Maintaining safety and situational awareness of NRC-licensed facilities and materials;
  2. Assessing and disseminating threat information; and
  3. Responding to safety and security-related incidents involving licensees through independent situational analysis in order to ensure that its licensees are implementing appropriate protective measures.
- B.** Inability to perform this PMEF would limit or delay coordination of Federal resources required to ensure adequate protection of public health and safety, to promote the common defense and security, and to protect the environment.

#### **VII. REFERENCES**

##### ***Code of Federal Regulations***

Title 10, "Energy."

##### ***U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Documents***

NRC Bulletin 2005-02, "Emergency Preparedness and Response Actions for Security-Based Events," July 18, 2005.

NRC Continuity of Operations Plan, April 19, 2012.

NRC Public Web Site:

<http://www.nrc.gov>.

NUREG-0654/FEMA-REP-1, "Criteria for Preparation and Evaluation of Radiological Emergency Response Plans and Preparedness in Support of Nuclear Power Plants."

Regulatory Guide 3.67, "Standard Format and Content for Emergency Plans for Fuel Cycle and Materials Facilities," April 30, 2011 (ADAMS Accession Number ML103360487).

### ***Other Federal Guidance***

National Incident Management System (NIMS), December 2008.

National Response Framework and Associated Annexes, January 2008, available at <http://www.fema.gov/national-response-framework>.

Nuclear/Radiological Incident Annex (NRIA), June 2008, available at <http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/25554?fromSearch=fromsearch&id=5528>.

Presidential Directives—

HSPD-5, "Management of Domestic Incidents," February 28, 2003.

PPD-5, "Management of Domestic Incidents."

PPD-8, "National Preparedness," September 2011.

### ***United States Code***

Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, Pub. L. 113-235, Section 401, 128 Stat. 2130 (2014).

Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1980 (5 U.S.C. App. 1, 94 Stat. 3585) May 5, 1980.

Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Pub. L. 93-288, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 5121-5270, and Related Authorities).

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Directive and Handbook 8.2 are being revised to inform employees of the essential elements of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Incident Response Program (IRP) and describe the NRC organizational responsibilities that will provide assistance, commit staff, and manage the NRC response to incidents and emergencies involving nuclear and radiological facilities or materials licensed or regulated by the NRC.					

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## **I. INCIDENT RESPONSE PROGRAM**

### **A. Mission**

The Incident Response Program (IRP) mission is to continuously monitor U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission licensee operations and rapidly respond to safety- or security-related events involving NRC-licensed facilities and regulated activities.

### **B. General**

1. The IRP provides a structure for agency personnel to prepare for, respond to, and recover from licensee incidents where conditions exist or could lead to a radiological risk to public health or safety, the common defense and security, or the environment from an NRC-licensed or -regulated facility or activity. The IRP is a flexible, dynamic program that is adaptable to a wide range of initiating conditions or incidents and is used to respond to operational safety incidents, security incidents, and other incidents such as man-made or natural phenomena.
2. The IRP is flexible enough that it can be used to respond to incidents that do not necessarily involve NRC-licensed activities. During the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident, the NRC manned the Headquarters Operations Center (HOC) with a staff of boiling water reactor experts to provide analysis and insight into the event for agency leadership and other concerned stakeholders. The protective measures team provided analysis of the radiological consequences of the incident. The liaison teams provided information and analysis results to external stakeholders in the Federal and State governments, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and other international partners. The Office of Public Affairs (OPA) provided event-related information to the public through traditional media outlets and other electronic media. A site team was sent to Japan to provide technical insight and assistance to the

U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. The NRC was instrumental in setting up a consortium of industry experts to analyze the incident and provide support to the Japanese.

### C. Federal Guidelines

1. Presidential Policy Directive 8 (PPD-8), "National Preparedness," describes the Nation's approach to preparing for the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk to the security of the United States. The objective of PPD-8 is "a secure and resilient Nation with the capabilities required across the whole community to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk."
2. The National Response Framework (NRF) (available at <http://www.fema.gov/national-response-framework>) presents the guiding principles that enable all response partners to prepare for, and provide a unified national response to, disasters and emergencies from the smallest incident to the largest catastrophe. As part of the NRF, the incident annexes describe the concept of operations to address specific contingency or hazard situations, or an element of an incident requiring specialized application of the NRF.
3. The Nuclear/Radiological Incident Annex (NRIA) (available at <http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/25554?fromSearch=fromsearch&id=5528>) describes the policies, situations, concepts of operations, and responsibilities of the Federal departments and agencies governing the immediate response and short-term recovery activities for incidents involving release of radioactive materials to address the consequences of the event. These incidents may occur on Federally-owned or -licensed facilities, privately owned property, urban centers, or other areas, and may vary in severity from the small to the catastrophic. The incidents may result from inadvertent or deliberate acts. The NRIA applies to incidents where the nature and scope of the incident require a Federal response to supplement the State, Tribal, or local incident response.
4. The NRC is designated as the Federal agency, also known as the Federal Coordinating Agency, responsible for coordinating Federal response efforts for incidents occurring at NRC-licensed facilities and for radioactive materials regulated by either by the NRC or the NRC's Agreement States Program. As the Federal Coordinating Agency the NRC is responsible for coordinating the Federal response 'unity of effort' to respond to an incident. In this capacity the NRC's responsibility is onsite (i.e., on the licensee's property).
5. If the event becomes complex (typically at the General Emergency level), or is terrorist related, overall coordination of the Federal response effort transitions, by statute, to the Secretary of Homeland Security. In such an event, the NRC is still responsible for coordinating Federal onsite activities while the Department of

Homeland Security (DHS), typically through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), coordinates offsite activities and the overall Federal effort. Other Federal agencies such as the Department of Energy (DOE), the National Nuclear Security Agency (NNSA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the U.S. Department of State (DOS) will also respond to the incident.

#### **D. Licensee, State, and Local Government Interactions**

1. Licensees are responsible for mitigating the consequences of an incident at the incident location. Most incidents are mitigated by the licensees without further deterioration or significant issues. The NRC maintains an awareness of offsite conditions and activities related to incidents in order to protect public health, safety, and the environment. For incidents involving facilities or materials licensed by the NRC or an Agreement State, the NRC performs an independent assessment of the safety of the facility or material. Data is collected, verified, analyzed, and evaluated by NRC staff in order to arrive at an independent assessment of the situation and determine the adequacy of safety and protective measures being recommended or implemented. The primary responsibility for dealing with an incident remains with the licensee. However, the NRC may give advisory support and may assist the licensees in diagnosing the situation, identifying critical problems, and determining courses of action and additional precautionary measures, as necessary and appropriate, under its statutory responsibilities.
2. During a significant incident, the licensee provides notification to State, local, and Tribal officials; the NRC; and other Government officials, as required. The Governor or other statutorily-designated official is ultimately responsible for the health and welfare of the citizens of his or her State. The Governor takes actions to protect the public based on the nature of the event, whether there is a radioactive release, and the current conditions surrounding the incident location. The NRC contacts State, local, and Tribal officials to establish a liaison point-of-contact, offers support and assistance, and receives requests for assistance provided by other Federal Government agencies. When requested, the NRC advises State, local, or Tribal authorities on actions to mitigate the consequences of the incident and to protect public health and safety and the environment.

## **II. INCIDENT RESPONSE ORGANIZATION**

### **A. Responsibilities and Authorities**

1. Under Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1980, Section 3, "Emergency Powers," the Chairman may assume all powers vested in the Commission pertaining to an emergency concerning a facility or materials licensed by the agency. In accordance

with the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, the Chairman shall notify the other members of the Commission, the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate, not later than 1 day after the Chairman begins performing functions under the authority of Section 3 of Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1980.

2. The Director, Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response (NSIR) is responsible for the IRP, and has tasked subordinate division directors with the responsibility of developing and maintaining the IRP. This assignment of responsibility allows for the development and maintenance of programmatic guidance, planning, and execution of all facets of the IRP. This includes programs or plans and the IRP training program for the staff that are members of the NRC incident response organization.
3. Regional aspects of the IRP are the responsibility of each regional administrator, who has tasked certain responsibilities to his or her staff. This management directive requires standardized implementation of the incident response program for the HOC and all regional Incident Response Centers (IRCs). Periodic reviews of the HOC and regional IRC procedures, practices, and protocols are conducted to ensure the incident response program is implemented consistently throughout NRC.

## **B. Facilities and Resources**

1. Headquarters Operations Center (HOC)
  - (a) The HOC serves as the focal point for communications, analysis, and response during incidents involving a U.S. commercial nuclear power plant, research or test reactor, fuel cycle facility, gaseous diffusion plant, or nuclear materials licensee. The HOC is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with a Headquarters Operations Officer (HOO) and a Headquarters Emergency Response Officer (HERO). The HOO and the HERO routinely receive incident notifications from all stakeholders.
  - (b) When the HOC is activated, teams of specialists are assembled to obtain, monitor, trend, and evaluate incident information and to assess the potential impact of the incident or emergency. The NRC incident response team members maintain availability to staff the HOC to respond to an incident. Routine participation of team members in drills and exercises ensures the agency maintains a high state of readiness for incident response.

- (c) The agency maintains essential equipment to support NRC incident response operations and maintains dependable and multiple backup systems for telecommunications, information technology, and facility support. When required, HOC functions can be transferred to an alternate site for Continuity of Operations (COOP).

## 2. Regional Incident Response Centers

Each of the four NRC regional offices maintains a regional IRC equipped with communications equipment, response facilities, resources, and designated work areas for the regional response team. Each regional IRC serves as the focal point for regional incident response. In the "Monitoring" incident response mode (see Section III of this handbook for a description of all the incident response modes), the response is led by the regional administrator or designee and is supported by regional technical staff. Supplemental support may be provided by selected technical staff at headquarters (HQ), as needed. The regional IRC provides the point-of-contact to HQ for coordination of activities related to the incident response. Personnel are available to respond on an as-needed basis, and depending on the incident complexity and severity, the regional office may partially or fully staff its IRC. For a severe incident or emergency at a licensee's site, the regional office staffs its IRC and, when necessary, dispatches a site team to the incident site and other emergency response facilities.

## 3. Information Technology and Communications Systems

- (a) Information technology and communications systems used to support incident response are detailed in lower level documents. Computer software programs are available for incident response and are identified in supporting procedures.
- (b) The staff conducting assessment activities relies on information technology solutions to predict radiological consequences of the event and how it will potentially affect the public, the environment, or both. Data is forwarded from licensees to be processed by NRC staff at the HOC and the regional IRC. Information regarding facility critical parameters is provided either electronically or by telephone. For example, the Emergency Response Data System is capable of displaying selected real-time safety system data from a nuclear power plant at the HOC and the regional IRC. Other communication systems (e.g., secure telephone and fax machines, electronic library, computer network, and communications hardware and software systems) provide additional tools for the full operation of the HOC, the regional IRC, and the dispatched site teams.



**C. NRC Incident Response**

1. Incident response manual chapters and procedures are used to manage and respond to an incident. They are periodically updated and contain the overall response plan guidance and assigned responsibilities to perform incident response functions involving NRC licensees. They identify the following:
  - (a) NRC commitments in meeting the requirements of Homeland Security PPD-5, "Management of Domestic Incidents," and coordinating and supporting responsibilities identified in the NRF and associated Annexes;
  - (b) NRC incident response groups, including the HQ response teams, the regional base team, and the site team;
  - (c) Responsibilities of the licensees; NRC HQ and regional offices; State, local, and Tribal governments; and other Federal agencies;
  - (d) Incident response modes, functions, and recovery activities; and
  - (e) HQ implementing procedures and standardized regional implementing procedures.
2. NRC HQ and each region, under the guidance and oversight of NSIR, develop and maintain specific implementing procedures. Additionally, incident response manual chapters contain provisions to ensure consistency between HQ and the regions.
3. NSIR maintains a lessons-learned (corrective action) program that identifies incident response deficiencies and their associated resolution. These findings support continuing improvement as the NRC responds to actual incidents and participates in periodic drills and exercises. The lessons-learned program ensures that critical deficiencies receive immediate attention and less significant conditions have the appropriate resources applied.

**D. Training of Emergency Responders**

1. Personnel Selection and Training
  - (a) Experienced personnel from throughout the agency are selected, with the approval of their immediate supervisors, to become members of the incident response organization.
  - (b) Normally, individuals selected for response team positions already are subject matter experts and possess the skills and experience necessary to carry out their assigned response functions. They become qualified response team members by participating in a Training and Qualification Program. The qualification process enables the individual to fully understand the priorities of the response team and technical requirements to respond to an incident or

emergency. The NSIR Division of Preparedness and Response Coordination Branch performs an analysis of response team positions periodically to ensure that the training program is fully aligned with the IRP. Staff become qualified upon successful completion of the qualification and training program for their assigned response team position. A centralized system tracks training activities by individuals and positions.

- (c) A roster of qualified incident response team members is maintained by each response team program manager at HQ and the emergency response coordinator in the region. This roster is kept current to enable incident response team members to be notified by the Automatic Notification System to report to the HOC to respond to an incident or emergency. Region-specific methods are used to notify the regional staff.

## 2. Practice Drills and Exercises

- (a) The incident response organization periodically participates in training drills and emergency response exercises. Drills provide a training environment for the response teams to practice skills needed to meet the objectives of the incident response program. Emergency response exercises normally involve the entire incident response organization and evaluate the program's performance against established, predetermined performance standards. Following these drills and exercises, formal critiques are conducted to identify performance strengths and weak or deficient areas that need correction. An after-action report summarizes the important observations, strengths, and areas for improvement from these post-exercise critiques. Any weaknesses or deficiencies identified are assessed, prioritized, and evaluated for corrective actions.
- (b) NSIR and the regional offices coordinate NRC participation in periodic exercises for nuclear power plants, fuel cycle facilities, and transportation and materials licensees. These exercises provide opportunities to practice, learn, and assess response procedures and to confirm and maintain the capabilities of NRC incident response personnel, both at HQ and in the regional offices.
- (c) The NRC also participates in large-scale incident response exercises such as Federal interagency exercises, technical exercises, counter-terrorism exercises, continuity of Government and COOP exercises, exercises that have a radiological component, and incident response tabletop exercises organized and conducted by other organizations having radiological responsibilities.
- (d) More detailed information on training programs is included in the incident response program manual chapters and procedures.

### III. INCIDENT RESPONSE

Licensees and Agreement State officials are required to notify the NRC HOC of significant incidents as outlined in various sections of Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (e.g., 10 CFR 50.72, "Immediate notification requirements for operating nuclear power reactors"). Certain reportable incidents activate the incident response program and initiate a response by the NRC. The notification and communications process provides information concerning the incident that is independently assessed by NRC personnel in a timely manner.

#### A. Emergencies at Licensed Nuclear Facilities

1. Licensee incidents that escalate to emergencies at nuclear power plants are classified in one of four categories or levels: Notification of Unusual Event, Alert, Site Area Emergency, and General Emergency. Regulated materials facilities categorize their emergency incidents as an Alert or a Site Area Emergency only. Although these emergency classification levels have expected actions for licensees and State, local, and Tribal responders, the NRC bases its response on incident severity and uncertainty. Each of the emergency action levels are defined in Section IV, "Glossary," of this handbook.
2. The agency's response to an incident depends on the severity and uncertainty of the incident. Incidents having little or no safety significance may be handled by the NRC regional office in whose boundaries the incident occurred. These incidents do not change the normal response posture of the agency. Certain incidents may require that the agency change its response posture in order to ensure proper incident response. In each circumstance, the NRC implements a graded approach to incident response and decisionmaking.
3. The NRC's response to an incident may range from routine followup activities to a complete activation of both the regional IRC and the HOC and dispatch of a site team to the incident site and other emergency response facilities. The NRC uses the following formal incident response modes for responding to incidents at its licensed facilities:
  - (a) **Normal:** The Normal incident response mode includes all activities designed to maintain incident response readiness and 24/7 staffing of the HOC by HOOs and HEROs. In addition, the NRC is poised to respond at its alternate COOP site. The regional offices are prepared to back up each other and HQ.
  - (b) **Monitoring:** Monitoring entails a heightened state of readiness for incident information acquisition and assessment. The responsible regional office leads the agency response and appropriately staffs its IRC with a regional base team. NRC HQ supports the region, but the HOC is not normally fully staffed. For an incident that effects more than one region, HQ will assume the lead for the

agency response and each affected region will monitor the performance of the licensees in their regions. An example would be the NRC response to natural phenomena, such as hurricanes and earthquakes, that affect licensees in more than one region.

(c) **Activation:**

(i) The NRC musters the necessary executive, reactor safety, fuel cycle, protective measures, safeguards, liaison, Federal coordination, public affairs and executive support teams, and support personnel to fully staff the HOC and the IRC. If the Chairman or his or her designee has assumed emergency authority pursuant to Section 3(a) of Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1980, the Chairman has the authority to perform the functions vested in the Commission pertaining to an emergency concerning a particular facility or materials licensed or regulated by the NRC. These functions include:

- declaring,
- responding,
- issuing orders,
- determining specific policies,
- advising the civil authorities and the public,
- directing and coordinating actions relative to such emergency incident.

(ii) If the Chairman has not assumed the Section 3 emergency authority, agency officials continue to exercise the authority assigned to their positions. The region may begin to organize a site team to be dispatched to the incident site and other emergency response facilities if it is determined one is required.

(d) **Expanded Activation:** If the Chairman or his or her designee has assumed emergency authority pursuant to Section 3(a) of Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1980, as described in the "Activation" paragraph above, the Chairman has authority to perform the functions vested in the Commission pertaining to an emergency concerning a particular facility or materials licensed or regulated by the NRC. Nonetheless, if it is determined that a site team is required, the agency will progress to Expanded Activation. This occurs when the site team is present onsite and at other emergency response facilities and turnover from the HOC is complete. The Chairman or designee may delegate specific response authorities to the Site Team Director. If the Chairman or his or her designee has not assumed emergency authority pursuant to Section 3(a) of Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1980, agency officials continue to exercise the authority assigned to their positions.

**B. Notifications to the Headquarters Operations Center**

1. Notifications to the HOC may come from NRC licensees, State agencies that regulate Agreement State licensees, other Federal agencies, security and law enforcement personnel, contractors, military facilities, private citizens, or even by news coverage. The HOO/HERO evaluates the information received and notifies the appropriate HQ and regional offices. In the case of emergencies, the HOO/HERO notifies NRC senior management who determine the appropriate agency response and may inform other Federal agencies; State, local, and Tribal organizations; and other licensees, as appropriate.
2. Security-related report notifications are also routinely received at the HOC and disseminated to authorized personnel who have a need-to-know.
3. In addition, information involving the transportation of certain quantities of radioactive materials is provided to the HOC for dissemination to NRC management and other appropriate Federal and State organizations.

**C. Dissemination of Information to NRC Management and Staff**

The HOC staff receives both nonemergency and emergency event notifications. The information in nonemergency reports is communicated to the regional duty officer (RDO) and the appropriate HQ emergency officer (EO) or equivalent in a timely manner. They inform appropriate NRC HQ and regional managers who will initiate appropriate followup investigations or activities. HQ and regional staff perform an initial assessment of the safety significance of each report. Event reports are posted to the NRC Public Web site, available at <http://www.nrc.gov>. Security reports and radioactive material shipment information are shared only with select personnel at the NRC and other select State and Federal agencies with a need-to-know.

**D. Decisionmaking and Protocols During a Reported Incident**

1. The NRC incident response is tailored to each reported incident. Pre-designated incident response postures enable the agency to activate response capabilities in a structured manner and focus the agency's response commensurate with the event's characteristics, uncertainty, and severity as well as the licensee's activities.
2. For complex or significant incidents, the decisionmaking process begins with notification of the appropriate office's EO; the responsible RDO; the Incident Response Directorate Manager-on-Call; the responsible regional administrator; the Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR); or the Director, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards (NMSS). If the incident involves safeguards/security considerations, the NSIR, DSO, Intelligence Liaison and Threat Assessment Branch, duty officer will also be notified. The decision to change the NRC response posture is made by the responsible regional

- administrator and the appropriate HQ office director. In the case of terrorism-related incidents that are non-facility specific or non-region specific, the decision to change the NRC response posture is made by an Executive Team (ET) member in consultation with the ET Director. Additional actions, such as staffing the regional IRC and HOC, are outlined in IRP procedures.
3. For an incident, the NRC response mode is determined by whether or not the event is clearly understood, and the NRC's independent assessment of incident conditions. The NRC response mode for other types of incidents, such as a transportation incident involving NRC-licensed or -regulated material, a regional electric grid incident affecting multiple licensed facilities, a large scale natural disaster, a national-level domestic threat, and/or a terrorist threat or attack, not focused at a specific facility, is determined by the NRC's independent assessment of the available incident-related information, including information from licensees and other sources.

#### **E. NRC Response Teams**

1. The NRC IRP uses organized incident response teams to assist in independently assessing response actions. The responsibilities of each team are further described in response team procedures developed by HQ response program managers and regional emergency response coordinators.
2. The HQ response to an incident is led by an ET. The ET also is the interface between the agency and the highest levels of the Federal and State governments. The HQ response teams support the ET and regional base and site teams decisionmaking efforts:
  - (a) The Reactor Safety Team and the Fuel Cycle Safety Team assess facility parameters, conditions, and potential radiological and chemical challenges.
  - (b) The Protective Measures Team monitors and independently determines potential radiological exposure to the public and performs assessments of potential consequences and licensee mitigative measures.
  - (c) The Safeguards Team assesses licensee security activities in response to security-related incidents and coordinates security response actions with law enforcement and intelligence agencies.
  - (d) The Liaison Team advises members of Congress; State, local, and Tribal government authorities; and international stakeholders on the status of the incident.
  - (e) The Federal Coordination Team maintains contact with the appropriate Federal agencies and, when requested, provides NRC liaisons to DHS, FEMA, and the White House.

- (f) OPA issues press releases and responds to inquiries from the news media and other interested parties.
  - (g) The Corporate Support Team provides logistical and administrative support to the incident response teams.
3. Each NRC region maintains two response teams to monitor and assess the incident in support of the regional administrator in the IRC and at the site of the incident.
- (a) The Regional Base Team initially responds to the incident when the NRC enters the Monitoring response mode. Regional staff carry out reactor safety and protective measures, and security assessments. Other staff perform State government and local Federal office liaison activities. The region's Office of Public Affairs issues press releases and responds to inquiries from the news media and other interested parties.
  - (b) The Regional Site Team is dispatched to the site of the incident when the NRC determines that an NRC presence is needed. During Expanded Activation, the ET Director delegates some of his or her legal authority to the Site Team Director and the Site Team carries out all of the assessment and many of the liaison functions of the other response teams with the support of the Regional Base Team and the HQ response teams. NRC HQ remains the primary point of contact for DHS, FEMA, Congress, the White House and international stakeholders. The ET Director maintains overall responsibility for the NRC response.

#### **F. Communication and Coordination with External Stakeholders**

The NRC is committed to maintaining communications and sharing information with external stakeholders during the response to an incident. During a licensee-declared emergency and/or when the NRC enters or changes its response posture, the NRC maintains communications with DHS, FEMA, DOE, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), USDA, HHS, the Department of Transportation, and other agency partners within State, local, and Tribal governments. Other external stakeholders that the NRC communicates with during an incident response include the White House, members of Congress, international organizations, DOS, and the news media.

#### **G. Return to Normal Operations**

The NRC's deactivation of incident response capabilities and, if applicable, participation in recovery activities are performed in a structured manner. Whether acting on the NRC's own authority or in accordance with the NRF, deactivation efforts include collecting incident-related information and records, identifying and assigning post-incident activities and investigations, replenishing expended response-related consumables, and developing lessons-learned.

## **IV. GLOSSARY**

### **Alert**

An incident is in progress or has occurred that involves an actual or a potentially substantial degradation of the level of safety of the plant, a security incident in a plant-protected area, notification of an airborne attack threat, or notification of hostile action within the owner-controlled area. Any releases are expected to be limited to small fractions of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Protective Action Guideline exposure levels.

### **Emergency**

An abnormal event or condition associated with NRC-licensed or -regulated facilities or materials, or Agreement State licensed materials that require licensee action to minimize the adverse impact on public health, safety, security, property, and the environment.

In accordance with the National Response Framework (NRF) and as defined by the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Public Law 93–288, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 5121-5270, and Related Authorities), an emergency is “any occasion or instance for which, in the determination of the President, Federal assistance is needed to supplement State, Tribal, and local efforts and capabilities to save lives and to protect property and public health and safety, or to lessen or avert the threat of a catastrophe in any part of the United States.”

### **Emergency Action Levels**

For nuclear power facilities and certain radioactive material licensee incidents that meet or exceed this threshold, an emergency requires the declaration of one of four emergency classes: Notification of Unusual Event, Alert, Site Area Emergency, or General Emergency.

### **General Emergency**

An incident is in progress or has occurred that involves actual or imminently substantial core degradation or melting with a potential for loss of containment integrity, or a security incident resulting in loss of physical control of the facility. Releases can be reasonably expected to exceed EPA Protective Action Guideline offsite exposure levels in more than the immediate site area.



**Incident**

An abnormal condition associated with nuclear or radioactive materials requiring immediate, but usually not urgent, attention in order to ensure conditions do not deteriorate to a level that impacts public health, safety, and security. In most instances, this condition may be neutralized or otherwise controlled at the time of the occurrence. Generally, the incident can be controlled by the licensee's resources in the immediate area and usually is not an immediate threat to public health, safety, or security. A significant or severe incident may escalate to an emergency condition.

**Notification of Unusual Event**

An incident, including a confirmed security incident, is in progress or has occurred that indicates a potential degradation of the level of safety of the plant. No releases of radioactive material requiring offsite response or monitoring are expected unless further degradation of safety systems occurs.

**Nuclear Power Plant Emergency Class Levels**

See NUREG-0654/FEMA-REP-1, "Criteria for Preparation and Evaluation of Radiological Emergency Response Plans and Preparedness in Support of Nuclear Power Plants," and NRC Bulletin 2005-02, "Emergency Preparedness and Response Actions for Security-Based Events."

**Regulated Material Facilities and Gaseous Diffusion Plant Emergency Class Levels**

See Regulatory Guide 3.67, "Standard Format and Content for Emergency Plans for Fuel Cycle and Materials Facilities," January 1992.

**Site Area Emergency**

An incident is in progress or has occurred that involves actual or likely major failures of plant functions needed for protection of the public, a security incident in a plant vital area, or a site attack. Any releases are not expected to exceed EPA Protective Action Guideline exposure levels, except near the site boundary.