

# COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE

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COMMITTEE: Design and Procurement Committee

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SUBJECT: Task Force on Computer Software

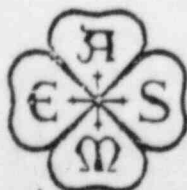
DATE: August 1, 1985

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TO: Edward J. Kreh  
Chairman, D&PCS

I am pleased to offer the comments of the NRC staff on the report of the Task Force on Computer Software. The comments are similar to those presented by Bill Altman to the D&PSC at the Williamsburg meeting. The specific comments are as follows:

1. Quality assurance for computer applications is an important issue, and we interpret the establishment of a computer software task force by the NQA Committee as an indication that NQA shares NRC's concern for the potential for safety problems arising from insufficient quality in computer applications in the nuclear industry.
2. The NRC acknowledges the effort expended by the task force and concurs with the task force report recommendation that NQA-1 be modified.
3. The NRC staff also recognizes that the recommendations of the task force do little more than clarify the scope of NQA-1's applicability as it pertains to computer software. The proposed changes are basically semantic and do not address the substance of the problem which is the lack of comprehensive, implementation-level guidance for QA for computer software and computer applications in the nuclear industry.
4. Further NQA Committee work in this area would benefit from reconstituting the charter of its task force to be more ambitious with regard to the development of substantive, implementation-level, SQA guidance and to broaden the membership of the task force to include appropriate expertise and experience in software, engineering, nuclear computer applications, and nuclear plant operations.
5. We suggest that the expanded task force take advantage of work already done by others, including the IAEA, IEEE, and DOD, regarding the application of quality principles to computer software and hardware.



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We endorse the work of the task force in clarifying that NQA-1 does apply to computer software. However, no implementation-level guidance document is available, and we believe that one should be developed as soon as possible, preferably by a consensus-standards-writing body. We are continuing our efforts on software quality assurance as Bill described at the Williamsburg meeting and are currently working on the development of an information notice on the subject.

James L. Milhoan, Chief  
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