



U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Open Government Plan

Update
July 2020



Purpose of the 2020 Update to the NRC Open Government Plan

In 2009, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) instructed Federal agencies to incorporate the principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration into daily operations. Previously published U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Open Government Plans and updates from 2010 to 2019 identified and provided evidence on how the NRC incorporated these principles into the agency's core mission. These prior plans reflect how the NRC has always viewed these principles as critical to achieving the agency's mission to protect public health and safety and the environment. The NRC's Open Government Plans describe concrete, measurable steps the agency has implemented to openly conduct its work, publish information online, and meet dissemination obligations.

The 2020 update provides examples of recent activities that build on previous NRC Open Government Plans published on the NRC Open Government Web page at <https://www.nrc.gov/public-involve/open/philosophy.html#plan> and continues to demonstrate how the NRC integrates openness into the agency's core mission. This updated plan does not restate material from previously published plans. The NRC continues to pursue and expand on the key initiatives described in prior Open Government Plans and status updates.

COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

The NRC has overcome challenges resulting from the COVID-19 public health emergency to meet its goals of openness and transparency. For example, many public meetings and gatherings, traditionally conducted at NRC Headquarters, Regional offices and in communities near licensed facilities, became virtual meetings and webinars, using information technology platforms such as Skype and WebEx. The accessibility of these virtual meetings enabled higher than normal public participation. While some events, such as the annual Regulatory Information Conference (RIC) scheduled for March 10-12, 2020, were cancelled in order to help contain the spread of the novel coronavirus, virtual communication channels and information resources were made available to ensure continued engagement with key industry and public stakeholders.

As of May 31, 2020, NRC actions related to the COVID-19 public health emergency include the following:

- Conducting 117 virtual public meetings, including 24 directly related to COVID-19 regulatory concerns;
- Establishing 26 Web pages devoted to COVID-19 regulatory actions, such as exemptions from certain requirements that enabled licensees to follow public health guidelines for "social distancing" while maintaining reasonable assurance of public health and safety;
- Composing 190 social media posts on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube related to COVID-19;
- Publishing five notices in the *Federal Register* extending the comment period on documents of public interest.

Recent Activities and Status Updates

The NRC executive leadership is committed to practices that promote transparency and encourage participation in agency activities. This participation is vital in providing valuable insights to help focus agency efforts to ensure safety and security, while appropriately balancing the interests of

NRC stakeholders. The following examples show how the NRC proactively promotes transparency and encourages participation:

- From January 2020 through May 2020, the NRC held more than 270 public meetings to engage, solicit input from, and inform the public about the agency's regulatory activities.
- The NRC continues to use its social media platforms to keep the public informed of its regulatory activities and to highlight the skills and diversity of its staff. While primarily focused on Twitter and Facebook, the agency also regularly publishes content to the NRC YouTube channel and LinkedIn page. Twitter is the agency's most dynamic social media platform. NRC tweets in calendar year 2019 saw significant increases in engagements and impressions from the previous year, earning more than 20,000 engagements and approximately 2.4 million impressions. The platform's audience surpassed 12,000 followers in May 2020. Highlights for Facebook include a total of more than 7,900 page likes, an average of more than 1,000 new likes each year since launching the platform in August 2014. Since the end of calendar year 2018, posts on the agency's Facebook page have earned more than 102,000 engagements, including clicks, likes, shares, comments, and video views. NRC videos on YouTube have 375,000 collective lifetime views equaling approximately 12,000 hours of watch time. The agency's LinkedIn page has nearly 21,000 followers.
- During the 2020 COVID-19 public health emergency, the agency initiated the #OntheJob social media campaign, publishing content to reinforce the message that NRC staff members continue to carry out their important safety and security mission even while working remotely. Since mid-March 2020, the agency published a total of 45 #OntheJob messages on all social media platforms, earning nearly 9,000 engagements, more than 137,000 impressions, and approximately 3,300 views of two videos produced specifically for the campaign.
- The RIC is the NRC's largest public meeting and is the agency's premier conference. Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, the agency cancelled the 2020 RIC (slated to be held in March.) Although this conference was cancelled, the expected number of attendees was on par with the 2019 RIC, with 2,329 participants registered to attend. The NRC planned to leverage various venues to facilitate attendee interaction for this conference through live polling and electronic questions and answers, the ability to check-in and rate technical sessions electronically, and an opportunity to social network through the RIC app. The NRC also planned to leverage WebEx technical sessions and interactive digital exhibits to facilitate engagement with the attendees. In addition, the NRC continues to leverage social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, YouTube) to communicate information about the RIC as well as to spotlight special programming and events. Upon cancellation of the conference, the NRC sent a video to all of the RIC 2020 registrants to showcase some of the agency's transformational efforts that were going to be presented at the 2020 RIC.
- The NRC published, in March 2020, research information sheets (<https://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/regulatory/research/activities.html>) on planned activities for fiscal years 2020-2022 to support stakeholder visibility into the research program. The information sheets describe research being conducted by the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research published across a wide variety of technical disciplines including detailed projects information on plans, projected benefits, deliverables, and resources.
- The NRC's official recordkeeping system is called the Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS). The Publicly Available Records System, the public-facing

portion of ADAMS, contains more than 1.8 million documents. From January 2020 through May 2020, more than 340,000 publicly-available records were added. During that same time frame, more than 422,000 searches were conducted for publicly-available documents.

- The NRC provides the public real-time information on its Web site on the NRC's rulemaking and petition for rulemaking activities (<https://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/rulemaking-ruleforum/active/RuleIndex.html>). The data are refreshed every 2 weeks and include project milestones, NRC points of contact, and regulatory priorities. Information on changes since the last update to the system can be found under the Changes tab on the NRC Rules and Petitions Web page (<https://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/regulatory/rulemaking/rules-petitions.html>).
- The NRC published a searchable online version of the 2019-2020 Information Digest at <https://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/sr1350/>. The Information Digest provides an all-in-one resource highlighting the NRC's regulatory responsibilities and licensing activities. It is an easy-to-use quick reference that illustrates notable facts about the NRC, including information on the reactor decommissioning timeline and an appendix listing all commercial nuclear power reactors in the United States. This year, the agency added an audio book version of the Information Digest to help increase its reach among members of the public. The 2020-2021 edition of the Information Digest is planned to be released in September 2020.
- The NRC has a dedicated Web link to its privacy program, <https://www.nrc.gov/privacy/>. The privacy program responds to the Privacy Act of 1974, as implemented by OMB Circular A-130, "Managing Information as a Strategic Resource," updated July 28, 2016; the E-Government Act of 2002; and NRC policies. The privacy program's objective is to balance the information requirements and operational needs of the NRC against the privacy interests of the individual.
- In alignment with the NRC's commitment to public participation, the NRC has a public-facing Web page at <https://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/plans-performance/transforming-nrc.html> to inform stakeholders and members of the public about the status of efforts to transform the NRC. The NRC's transformation vision is to become a modern, risk-informed regulator. The NRC recognizes the need to innovate to focus energy and resources on the most important issues to maintain its safety and security mission. Topics addressed include (1) Assessing the Future, (2) Investing in Our People, (3) Modernizing NRC Decision-Making, (4) Fostering a Culture of Change, (5) Innovating How We Work, and (6) Building Strong Partnerships. The NRC updates this Web page as developments warrant.
- The agency's high-value datasets and the Enterprise Data Inventory are downloadable from the NRC's public Web page at <https://www.nrc.gov/data> and from the Data.gov Web site at <https://www.data.gov>.
- The NRC has continued to routinely examine material for proactive disclosure as set forth in Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) 9.15, "Availability of records," and 10 CFR 9.21, "Publicly available records." The agency reports on its use of proactive disclosure in annual Chief Freedom of Information Act Officer reports (<https://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/foia/chief-officer-reports/>).
- From January 2020 to May 2020, the NRC has published approximately 80 FRNs providing the public with an opportunity to comment on NRC documents such as rulemakings, license

amendment request, information collections, and guidance documents. The NRC is interested in obtaining the public's opinion on the agency's need for the information, the accuracy of the burden estimate, ways to improve the information collection, and ways to further minimize the burden on respondents.