

# Industry's COVID Lessons Learned – Part 2

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# Overview

- The COVID “Experiment”
- What We Learned
- The New Normal
- Adaptation

# The COVID “Experiment”

- COVID restrictions created a national experiment in technology-enabled work
- Expanded use of technology dramatically changed how we communicate, get work done, and support our work and relationships
- Technology-enabled work:
  - Is changing workplace culture
  - Is a boon in many ways, but brings challenges as well
  - Has highlighted what can and can't be done virtually

# What Have We Learned about Inspections?

- Direct Observation (i.e., inspector presence onsite)
  - Is an essential element of the inspection program
  - Helps build or maintain “feel-for-the-plant”
  - Is important in training new inspectors
  - Requires firm, physical logistics (travel, workspace, schedule)

# What Have We Learned about Inspections?

- Technology-Enabled Work
  - Is feasible for some inspections
  - Is practical for entrances, exits, document retrieval and review
  - Mirrors technology-enabled workplace changes by licensees
  - Reduces or eliminates travel and plant workspace needs
  - Enables more flexible scheduling
  - Facilitates access to meetings held virtually
  - Increases dependence on electronic communications with licensee and residents
  - Requires strong IT support



# What Does the New Normal Look Like?

- For licensees:
  - COVID concerns remain a significant factor in decisions about plant staffing and operations, and a consideration in inspection support
  - COVID protective measures will remain in place for the foreseeable future, subject to state and local health department requirements
- Licensees are evaluating when/how to return to office over the second half of 2021, with varying levels of telework anticipated
- Result is likely to be:
  - Continued reliance on online tools (conferencing, file-sharing)
  - More flexibility for non-essential staff to work offsite
  - Reduced number of non-essential staff onsite
  - Reduced travel by plant personnel

# Adapting to the New Normal

## Guiding Principles

1. Build on COVID experience to prepare for contingencies
2. Maintain NRC effectiveness
3. Maintain NRC independence
4. Ensure unfettered inspector access
5. Recognize necessity of some onsite activities
6. Be flexible in application of technology-enabled inspection activities
7. Leverage information technology
8. Once effectiveness is assured, optimize efficiency
9. Consider pros and cons for both NRC and licensees

# Recommendations

- Establish guiding principles for adapting the inspection program to the New Normal
- Engage with industry and other external stakeholders to identify challenges and solutions and address staff questions
- Identify opportunities to improve the inspection process through the use of technology (e.g., information collection)



# Conclusions

- Technology-enabled work is part of the New Normal for NRC and industry
- It offers benefits to our non-essential workers
- The way industry supports NRC inspections has changed and these changes will continue in the New Normal
- Industry is eager to engage with the NRC to adapt the inspection program to the New Normal

# Questions

Given the New Normal described above, what practices or technologies would most help inspectors to:

- a) Protect themselves and plant workers from COVID concerns?
- b) Perform their work as effectively and efficiently as practical?
- c) Interface with plant personnel as easily as when onsite?
- d) Obtain requested documents as promptly as when onsite?
- e) Maintain their “feel-for-the-plant” during periods of telework?
- f) Complete inspection requirements as punctually as when onsite?