



OFFICE OF THE
INSPECTOR GENERAL

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

September 8, 2021

MEMORANDUM TO: Margaret M. Doane
Executive Director for Operations

FROM: Eric Rivera */RA/*
Acting Assistant Inspector General for Audit

SUBJECT: STAFF RESPONSE TO THE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR
GENERAL'S AUDIT OF THE NRC'S PANDEMIC
OVERSIGHT OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS
(OIG-21-A-13)

REFERENCE: DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR REACTOR AND
PREPAREDNESS PROGRAMS, MEMORANDUM DATED
SEPTEMBER 3, 2021

Attached is the Office of the Inspector General's (OIG) analysis and status of recommendations as discussed in the agency's response dated September 3, 2021. Based on this response, recommendation one remains open and resolved. Please provide a status update for the open and resolved recommendation by **July 31, 2022**.

If you have questions or concerns, please call me at (301) 415-7032 or Paul Rades, Team Leader, at (301) 415-6228.

Attachment: As stated

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Audit Report
AUDIT OF THE NRC'S PANDEMIC OVERSIGHT
OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS
(OIG-21-A-13)

Status of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Conduct an assessment that presents agency management with options for modifying inspection program documents and procedures to give staff flexibility for conducting inspections under irregular conditions.

Agency Response Dated
September 3, 2021:

The NRC staff agrees with the recommendation. In March 2021, the staff created a working group composed of senior inspectors from the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, the Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response, and all four NRC Regions to review all ROP baseline inspection procedures (IPs) to determine which elements of each IP could be accomplished remotely, and which elements must be accomplished onsite for the IP to be considered complete; to identify potential compensatory or alternate inspection activities, if any, in lieu of the required elements if circumstances preclude an inspector from being onsite to complete specific required elements of IPs; and to interview inspectors to identify best practices for accomplishing inspections, both in person and remotely. The objective of the working group is to recommend to management revisions to inspection program guidance based on lessons learned from the pandemic to standardize implementation of the inspection program and facilitate completing the baseline inspection program if travel and site access for inspectors are restricted in the future.

Following that effort, the staff plans to conduct a comprehensive review of lessons learned and best practices that will consider the additional experience gained from conducting inspections during the pandemic. This review will include engagement with external stakeholders and explore the impacts of the increased flexibilities utilized during COVID-19 on the effectiveness and efficiency of the inspection program overall in order to identify potential enhancements to the program for both emergency and non-emergency use.

Target date for completion: July 2022.

Point of contact: Daniel Merzke, NRR/DRO, 301-415-1457

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Status of Recommendations

Recommendation 1(cont.):

OIG Analysis:	The proposed actions meet the intent of this recommendation. The OIG will close this recommendation upon reviewing the product of the working group comprehensive review. This recommendation remains open and resolved.
Status:	Open: Resolved.