

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Fiscal Year 2021 Agency Report Question 1

Please provide a summary of your agency's activities undertaken to carry out the provisions of OMB Circular A-119, "Federal Participation in the Development and Use of Voluntary Consensus Standards and in Conformity Assessment Activities" and the National Technology Transfer and Advance Act (NTTAA). The summary should contain a link to the agency's standards-specific website(s) where information about your agency's standards and conformity assessment related activities are available.

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) uses voluntary consensus standards as an integral part of our regulatory framework. Standards contain technical requirements, safety requirements, guidelines, characteristics, and recommended practices for performance. The benefits of being actively involved in developing and using standards include improved safety, cost savings, improved efficiency and transparency, and regulatory requirements with high technical quality. Some standards are incorporated by reference into NRC regulations. The NRC's regulations may be found at <https://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/cfr/index.html>. The NRC staff also issues documents providing guidance on acceptable methods for complying with NRC regulations such as Regulatory Guides (RGs). These guidance documents frequently endorse and reference voluntary consensus standards as acceptable methods for compliance with NRC regulations. RGs are cataloged here <https://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/index.html#reg>.

The NRC implements the OMB Circular A-119, "Federal Participation in the Development and Use of Voluntary Consensus Standards and in Conformity Assessment Activities," consistent with the provisions of the NTTAA of 1995 (Public Law 104-113) through formal guidance to the NRC staff. Guidance to the NRC staff on standards work is provided in [NRC Management Directive \(MD\) 6.5](#), "NRC Participation in the Development and Use of Consensus Standards." MD 6.5 and its associated directive handbook were initially published in 1998 and were revised and reissued in 2016. MD 6.5 describes the NRC's process with respect to the participation in the development and use of consensus standards. This process consists of three primary steps: (1) identifying and prioritizing the need for new and revised technical standards, (2) participating in codes and standards development, and (3) endorsing codes and standards.

As an initiative to enhance agency use of standards and to exchange standards information with external stakeholders, in September 2021, the NRC hosted the fifth NRC Standards Forum. The goals of the NRC Standards Forum are for participants to help identify and prioritize standards for standards development organizations for development or revision and to initiate or support collaboration among participants in writing or updating standards. Our intent is to shorten the lengthy standards development cycle by encouraging collaboration among stakeholders including researchers producing technical information and standards writers who build upon their findings. The Standards Forum meetings are usually held once a year. A summary and related documents for the September 2021 Standards Forum can be found at <https://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/regulatory/standards-dev/standards-forum/2021.html>.

The NRC is working and intends to continue working with multiple standards development organizations to close technical and regulatory gaps through development and application of

consensus standards. These standards may be applied to regulatory activities for existing light-water reactors or new nuclear plant designs including advanced reactor technologies and small modular reactors. Standards continue to provide a critical element in our safety mission. For more information, the NRC Web site on standards development is at:
<https://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/regulatory/standards-dev.html>.