

The purpose of these questions and topics is to spark conversation and uncover lessons learned or potential opportunities for future improvement. As a continually learning organization, it is important for the agency to fully explore the impact of the practices utilized during the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) on the ROP in order to make informed decisions regarding what long-term improvements can be made to the ROP for both future emergencies and non-emergency conditions.

Health and Safety of Licensee and NRC Personnel:

Each licensee and each NRC region developed written policies and practices to ensure the health and safety of licensee and NRC personnel was adequately protected throughout the PHE. These policies and practices were revised at various points during the PHE as information was learned and local conditions changed.

- Was the NRC and industry successful in ensuring that the health and safety of licensee and NRC staff throughout the PHE was adequately protected?
- Were the communications and implementation of site and staff protection expectations between licensee and NRC staff appropriate during the planning and performance of onsite inspection activities?

Prioritization and Performance of Operator Licensing and Safety and Security Inspections:

The NRC determined that operator licensing examinations were mission critical activities. In some cases, Emergency Preparedness inspections were mission essential activities. Some safety and security Reactor Oversight Program (ROP) inspections were rescheduled, inspection sample sizes were reduced, and some inspections were deferred. The need to prioritize inspections resulted in decision making challenges related to inspection scope and staff travel.

- Was the NRC and industry successful in developing an effective inspection priority scheme for the activities mentioned above?
- Were the communications, implementation, and overall strategies of decision making related to the above-mentioned activities successfully established and accomplished?

Many inspections relied on a hybrid approach as the PHE evolved. Resident and regional inspectors performed document and record review from remote locations but performed walkdowns and observations onsite. This resulted in less time onsite but inspections that could stretch longer than the traditional one or two weeks.

- Did this revised inspection approach have a positive or negative impact on licensee and NRC resources?
- Did this revised inspection approach have a positive or negative impact on inspection performance?

Inspector access to licensee information resources:

Resident and regional inspectors were provided access to licensee information resources in varying degrees during the initial and later response to the changing conditions of the public health emergency. For example, some sites provided licensee laptop computers to resident and regional inspectors so licensee information could be accessed from remote locations with minimal licensee interaction. Alternatively, some licensees assigned dedicated staff to provide documentation and records to regional inspectors through file sharing services.

- Were there significant logistical challenges or advantages to any of the approaches taken by licensees to provide inspectors with inspection and oversight related licensee information resources?
- Should the NRC and industry standardize any of the practices implemented in response to the PHE through future Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) revisions?

Long-term Improvements to the ROP:

Many of the practices that were implemented in response to the PHE have already been recognized as improvements.

- Do you have any suggestions for practices that were adopted out of necessity during the PHE that should be refined and applied going forward?