



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

July 21, 2022

MEMORANDUM TO: Eric Rivera
Acting Assistant Inspector General for Audits
Office of the Inspector General

FROM: Andrea D. Veil, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael King", is positioned to the left of the text "King, Michael signing on behalf of Veil, Andrea on 07/21/22".

King, Michael signing on behalf
of Veil, Andrea
on 07/21/22

SUBJECT: STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL'S AUDIT OF THE NRC'S PANDEMIC
OVERSIGHT OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS (OIG-21-A-13)

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) with a status update on the recommendation in OIG-21-A-13, "Audit of the NRC's Pandemic Oversight of Nuclear Power Plants" (Agencywide Documents and Management System (ADAMS) Accession No. [ML21214A042](#)).

On September 3, 2021, the NRC Deputy Executive Director for Reactor and Preparedness Programs provided an initial response to the audit recommendation ([ML21231A258](#)). On September 8, 2021, the OIG provided an analysis of the NRC's response agreeing with the proposed NRR actions to resolve the recommendation.

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.

Staff Response:

On November 5, 2021, The Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR) completed the "Comprehensive Baseline Inspection Program Review – Calendar Year 2021" ([ML21252A154](#)). The purpose of this review was to develop recommendations to revise the inspection program based on the lessons learned from the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) for emergent circumstances that preclude access to a licensee site. The review identified options for management consideration on the acceptability of digital media in lieu of direct observation for situations when inspector access to a site is precluded. The review also identified best practices for virtual interactions with licensee staff and electronic access to licensee documents.

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The review identified options for revising Inspection Manual Chapter (IMC) 2515, Appendix E, “Inspection Program Modifications During Pandemics, Epidemics, or Other Widespread Illnesses or Diseases” for circumstances where site access could be restricted (e.g., natural disasters). NRR management endorsement of the presented options will be included in the next IMC 2515, Appendix E revision.

Separately, NRR is in progress on a working group for the Follow-On Review of the Lessons Learned, Best Practices, and Challenges During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (Charter [ML21322A259](#)). This working group includes internal, external, and international insights and best practices from inspections conducted during the COVID-19 PHE. The outcome of this working group will provide NRR management with additional options for consideration for incorporation into the baseline inspection program to normalize the inherent flexibilities of the Reactor Oversight Process. The final report for this working group is anticipated to be complete in August 2022.

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GENERAL'S AUDIT OF THE NRC'S PANDEMIC OVERSIGHT OF NUCLEAR
POWER PLANTS (OIG-21-A-13) DATED: JULY 21, 2022.

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