U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Open Government Plan

Update
September 2021

Purpose of the 2021 Update to the NRC Open Government Plan

In 2009, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) instructed Federal agencies to incorporate the principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration into daily operations. Previously published U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Open Government Plans and updates from 2010 to 2020 identified and provided evidence on how the NRC incorporated these principles into the agency's core mission. These prior plans reflect how the NRC has always viewed these principles as critical to achieving the agency's mission to protect public health and safety and the environment. The NRC's Open Government Plans describe concrete, measurable steps the agency has implemented to openly conduct its work, publish information online, and meet dissemination obligations.

The 2021 update provides examples of recent activities that build on previous NRC Open Government Plans published on the NRC Open Government Web page at https://www.nrc.gov/public-involve/open/philosophy.html#plan and continues to demonstrate how the NRC integrates openness into the agency's core mission. This updated plan does not restate material from previously published plans. The NRC continues to pursue and expand on the key initiatives described in prior Open Government Plans and status updates.

COVID-19 Pandemic

The NRC has overcome challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic to meet its goals of openness and transparency. For example, a majority of the hundreds of public meetings traditionally conducted at NRC Headquarters, Regional offices and in communities near licensed facilities, were held virtually, using information technology platforms such as Microsoft Teams. The accessibility of these virtual meetings enabled higher than normal public participation.

All of the agency's most significant public events were conducted entirely in a virtual manner, including the annual Regulatory Information Conference (RIC), the largest stakeholder meeting the NRC holds annually. In 2021, the virtual RIC attracted more participants in more countries than previously, ensuring continued engagement with key industry and public stakeholders.

The NRC also leveraged online resources during the pandemic to maintain its long standing commitment to public communication. For example – the NRC created a COVID-19 resource page updating the public on all actions taken by the agency in regards to employee health, industry requests, and other responses that support accomplishment of the agency's mission. Specific office level pages provided information to industry stakeholders and licenses, social media platforms elaborated on COVID-19 activities, and 346 Federal Register Notices (FRNs) were published on extending the comment period on documents of public interest.

Recent Activities and Status Updates

The NRC executive leadership is committed to practices that promote transparency and encourage participation in agency activities. This participation is vital in providing valuable insights to help focus agency efforts to ensure safety and security, while appropriately balancing the interests of NRC stakeholders. The following examples show how the NRC proactively promotes transparency and encourages participation:

- Social Media - Social media is a significant information resource for the public. The NRC continues to use its social media platforms to maintain its presence as a credible and

reliable source for information on its regulatory activities, and for the skilled and diverse staff members who carry out the NRC mission. While still primarily focused on Twitter and Facebook, the agency also regularly publishes content to the NRC YouTube channel and LinkedIn page. Twitter is the agency's most dynamic social media platform. NRC tweets in calendar year 2020 and through May 2021 earned more than 37,000 engagements and 1.8 million impressions. Engagements on tweets, which are used as a key measurement of audience interest in NRC content, have increased year-to-year since 2016. The platform's audience grew to more than 13,000 followers by the end of May 2021. Highlights for Facebook include a total of more than 9,000 page likes by the end of May 2021, on pace with the yearly average of more than 1,000 new likes each year since launching the platform in August 2014. NRC Facebook posts in calendar year 2020 and through May 2021 earned more than 90,000 engagements, including clicks, likes, shares, comments, and video views, totaling nearly 338,000 engagements since the launch of the NRC Facebook page. NRC videos on YouTube have 423,000 collective lifetime views equaling approximately 15,000 hours of watch time. The agency's LinkedIn page has more than 25,000 followers.

- #OntheJob COVID-19 campaign - As the COVID-19 pandemic persists, the agency's Office of Public Affairs has continued the #OntheJob social media campaign, publishing content that supports the message that NRC staff members are able to safely balance onsite and remote work to ensure the safety and security of the nuclear facilities and materials it regulates. Since mid-March 2020 through May 2021, the agency published nearly 200 #OntheJob messages on Twitter and Facebook, earning almost 60,000 engagements, more than 330,000 impressions, and approximately 5,000 views of five videos produced related to the campaign. There were also additional LinkedIn #OnTheJob posts.

- Digital Information Digest - The NRC published a searchable online version of the 2020-2021 Information Digest at https://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/sr1350/. The Information Digest provides an all-in-one resource highlighting the NRC's regulatory responsibilities and licensing activities. It is an easy-to-use quick reference that illustrates notable facts about the NRC, including appendices listing NRC-licensed facility details, glossary of terms and a link to the abridged audio book version of the publication. This year, the Info Digest content is also formatted for better viewing on mobile devices. The 2021-2022 edition of the Information Digest is expected to be released in October 2021.

- Regulatory Information Conference (RIC) - The RIC is the NRC's largest public meeting and is the agency's premier conference. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the agency pivoted to host its first-ever virtual RIC, March 8-11, 2021. By leveraging technology, the virtual RIC reached a larger audience and brought together 4,343 attendees from 45 countries. The RIC was hosted on a virtual conference platform which enabled attendees the ability to participate in all aspects of the conference with a click of their mouse. Attendees were able to join any session of their choosing, respond to live polling questions and submit questions electronically, as well as view interactive digital exhibits and participate in a virtual tour of the NRC Operations Center. The NRC utilized social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn) to communicate information about the RIC program as well as to spotlight special programming and events. All of the sessions from the 2021 virtual RIC were web-streamed and are available from the NRC Webcast Portal at https://video.nrc.gov/. In addition, presentation materials and transcripts are accessible from the Program Agenda page of the RIC public website at: https://ric.nrc.gov/agenda

  Research Information Sheets - The NRC published, in July 2021, research information sheets

(https://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/regulatory/research/activities.html) on planned activities for fiscal years 2021-2023 to support stakeholder visibility into the research program. The information sheets describe research being conducted by the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research and include information such as research benefits, deliverables, and resources.

- Online Document System - The NRC's official recordkeeping system is called the Agencywide Documents Access and Management System or ADAMS. The Publicly Available Records System (PARS), the public facing portion of ADAMS, contains more than 3.2 million documents. From May 2020 through July 2021, approximately 75,000 public users accessed ADAMS and searched content more that 39.8 million times.

- Online Rulemaking - The NRC provides the public real-time information on its Web site on the NRC's rulemaking and petition for rulemaking activities (https://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/rulemaking-ruleforum/active/RuleIndex.html). The data is refreshed every 2 weeks and includes project milestones, NRC points of contact, and regulatory priorities. Information on changes since the last update to the system can be found under the Change Report section in NRC's Rules and Petitions Web page (https://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/regulatory/rulemaking/rules-petitions.html), , in the Changes tab on the NRC Rules page and Petitions for Rule Making page. .

- Online Privacy Program - The NRC has a dedicated Web link to its privacy program, https://www.nrc.gov/privacy/. The privacy program responds to the Privacy Act of 1974, as implemented by OMB Circular A-130, "Managing Information as a Strategic Resource," updated July 28, 2016; the E-Government Act of 2002; and NRC policies. The privacy program's objective is to balance the information requirements and operational needs of the NRC against the privacy interests of the individual.

- Transformation - In alignment with the NRC's commitment to public participation, the NRC has a public facing Web page at https://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/plans-performance/modern-risk-informed-reg.html to inform stakeholders and members of the public about the status of efforts to transform the NRC. The NRC's transformation vision is to become a modern, risk-informed regulator. The NRC recognizes the need to innovate to focus energy and resources on the most important issues to maintain its safety and security mission. Topics addressed include (1) Our transformation Journey, (2) Our People, (3) Be riskSMART, (4) Technology Adoption, and (5) Innovation. Recent updates to the page include access to the digital exhibit from the 2021 Regulatory Information Conference, where members of the public can hear NRC staff talk about projects that have resulted from NRC's transformation efforts. Additionally, the NRC staff added a link to solicit stakeholder feedback on how NRC is doing so far on its transformation journey. The NRC updates this Web page as developments warrant.

- Enterprise Data Inventory - The agency's high-value datasets (also known as the Enterprise Data Inventory) are downloadable from the NRC's Data Web site at https://www.nrc.gov/data .

- Record Availability - The NRC has continued to routinely examine material for proactive disclosure as set forth in Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) 9.15, "Availability of records," and 10 CFR 9.21, "Publicly available records." The agency reports on its use of proactive disclosure in annual Chief Freedom of Information Act Officer reports (https://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/foia/chief-officer-reports/).

- Public comment solicitation - From June 2020 to July 2021, the NRC has published approximately 590 Federal Register Notices (FRNs) providing the public with an opportunity to comment on NRC documents such as rulemakings, license amendment request, information collections, and guidance documents. The NRC is interested in obtaining the public's opinion on the agency's need for the information, the accuracy of the burden estimate, ways to improve the information collection, and ways to further minimize the burden on respondents.