

NRC's Internal Safety Culture

Successes, Challenges, and the Path Forward

Chairman Stephen G. Burns
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
June 3, 2015

NEA/CNRA/CSNI/CRPPH Joint Workshop on
Challenges and Enhancements to Safety Culture of
the Regulatory Body

Presentation Overview

- Internal Safety Culture
- Significance of Safety Culture
- Successes
- Challenges
- Path Forward
- Summary and Conclusions

Internal Safety Culture at NRC

- Safety culture is an integral part of NRC's organizational culture
- NRC's organizational culture is comprised of our mission, vision, values and principles of good regulation – all of which emphasize safety
- The integration of safety culture into NRC's broader organizational culture helps all employees understand that they have a responsibility for safety

Internal Safety Culture at NRC



Components of Organizational Culture:

- Mission
- Vision
- NRC Principles of Good Regulation
- Organizational Values

Safety culture is enhanced at NRC by actions and policies related to:

- Fostering a Questioning Attitude
- Open Door Policy
- Non-Concurrence Program
- Differing Professional Opinions Program

Significance of Safety Culture

- Why is it important?
- With external safety culture, operating experience demonstrates that there is a clear nexus, and inverse relationship, between safety culture and event occurrence.
- With internal safety culture, findings from previous employee assessments demonstrate that there is a positive relationship between safety culture and employee engagement which supports improved decision-making.

Successes

NRC self-assessments reveal:

- a strong emphasis on mission and organizational values
- a highly skilled and competent staff
- a culture of continuous improvement; willingness to learn from and reflect on “lessons learned”
- the high value placed on learning and development
- frequent encouragement of our employees to raise concerns
- a consistently high level of employee engagement

Challenges

- Complacency: safety culture is a concept that must be approached with an ever-vigilant and ongoing methodology
- Communication: constantly ensuring there is no potential employee fear of reprisal or retaliation
- Independence: always maintaining a healthy separation from industry and ensuring political influences do not compromise technical judgement
- Leadership: ensuring continuous support and demonstration of safety culture throughout the NRC

Path Forward

- A systematic approach for integrating safety culture into the broad organizational culture
- “Behavior Matters” initiative
- U.S. Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey
- NRC Office of Inspector General Internal Safety Culture and Climate Survey (August 2015)

Summary and Conclusions



- NRC's internal safety culture is an integral part of our broad organizational culture
- The safety culture of the regulator has a relation to the industry's safety culture
- NRC recognizes the direct relationship between internal safety culture and employee engagement which supports improved decision-making
- NRC has had successes but we continue to conduct self-assessments to identify and address challenges

Thank you for your attention!



For more information....

- Contact NRC internal safety culture staff at OrganizationalCulture.Resource@nrc.gov
- Information on the components of organizational culture (NRC Values; Principles of Good Regulation; Open Collaborative Work Environment; Open Door Policy; Non-Concurrence Process; and Differing Professional Opinions Program):
<http://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/values.html>
- NRC's external safety culture webpage:
<http://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/safety-culture.html>