

International Conference on Human and Organizational Aspects of Assuring Nuclear Safety – Exploring 30 Years of Safety Culture



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OECD/NEA's New Approach to Human Aspects of Nuclear Safety

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Synopsis

Fukushima Daiichi accident in 2011 in Japan has brought us new challenge to deal with “human” aspects of nuclear safety which have always been crucial elements of safety, but which often receive less attention than technical and equipment issues.

The key factors led to the accident were not only a huge tsunami that followed a massive earthquake, but also a variety of human failures: organizational decision-making, safety culture of the plant staff and the regulator, training to assure that operators are well prepared for a wide range of possible challenges.

In order to fully understand and respond to the lessons learned from the Fukushima accident, the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) created a new Division of Human Aspects of Nuclear Safety (HANS) which is focusing on the human issues related to nuclear safety. The Division of HANS is responsible for supporting the relevant work programmes of the NEA; fostering greater focus and building expertise in areas vital to effective nuclear safety such as safety culture, personnel training policies and practices; and safety-related public communication and stakeholder engagement.

In 2014, NEA produced the Green Booklet on the Characteristics of an Effective Nuclear Regulator noting that the characteristic of “safety focus and safety culture” was one of the four fundamental principles from which all regulatory body actions should be derived. Based on this understanding, in 2015, NEA published the follow up Green Booklet, Safety Culture of an Effective Nuclear Regulatory Body, providing main principles and attributes to be benchmarked for the regulatory bodies to encourage them to enhance their effectiveness as they fulfil their mission to protect public health and safety.

Many challenges exist to regulatory bodies' safety culture which must be recognised, understood and overcome. Continuing collective efforts could help turn these challenges into opportunities to further strengthen the overall health of the safety culture of regulatory bodies. To achieve this we need to ensure a continuing and consistent effort at national and international level.

Country or International Agency

OECD/NEA

Primary author: HAH, Yeonhee (OECD-NEA)

Presenter: HAH, Yeonhee (OECD-NEA)

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