

Source: Cabinet Office

Section 2: Bolstering Nuclear Disaster Management and Radiation Monitoring Under the NRA

It is absolutely vital to implement ongoing initiatives to ensure trust in the administration of nuclear energy regulation, taking into account the lessons from the accident at Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. The Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA) is tackling various policy challenges, based on its guiding principles of independent decision making, effective actions, open and transparent organization, improvement and commitment, and emergency response, in order to fulfill its mission of protecting the general public and the environment through rigorous and reliable regulation for nuclear power.

2-1 Initiatives in Nuclear Disaster Management

The NRA has been constantly improving the contents of NRA Guide for Emergency Preparedness and Response (NRA EPR Guide) to optimize the judgment criteria for developing the disaster prevention plans by actively incorporating the latest international knowledge. On July 3, 2019, the NRA EPR Guide as well as "Distribution and Administration of stable Iodine," which explains the implementation of the contents of the NRA EPR Guide, were revised to distribute and dose stable iodine agents in smoother and more appropriate manners in accordance with a report compiled by the "Study Team on Administration of Stabilized Iodine".

In addition, on February 5, 2020, based on clarification of initial emergency responses during the land transportation of nuclear fuel materials, etc., the NRA revised the NRA EPR Guide to clarify measures taken by the national government against a disaster during such transportations.

Steady progress is being made in developing a medical care system for nuclear emergency, and support for designation of Nuclear Emergency Core Hospitals.

2-2 Emergency Response Initiatives

In 2019, in order to further strengthen the emergency response capability of its emergency response personnel, the NRA improved its annual training and instruction programs for manpower management as a basis and systematically promoted the preparation of an ability enhancement sheet for each function team and the reflection of this information in the sheets for personnel evaluation. These reinforced the NRA's manpower management system for its personnel.

The NRA also conducted training in conjunction with nuclear operators' emergency drills to explore a method of smooth information sharing between the NRA's Emergency Response Center(ERC)'s plant team and nuclear operators' immediate response centers, thereby improving their emergency response capability.

In addition, at the Debriefing Session of Emergency Drills by Nuclear Operators in FY 2019, the NRA reported the evaluation results for the Emergency Drills by Nuclear Operators in commercial power reactor facilities and nuclear fuel facilities, etc. Furthermore, based on the results of training performed in FY2018, the NRA developed FY2019 training policies, based on which it developed the training scenarios, implemented training and evaluated training results. In FY2019, courses for commander judging ability for 5 nuclear operators and courses for response capabilities for 9 nuclear operators have conducted.

2-3 Emergency Radiation Monitoring Initiatives

To conduct effective emergency monitoring in accordance with the Nuclear Emergency Response Guidelines, the NRA established emergency monitoring centers in all areas in which nuclear power reactor facilities are located. The NRA has maintained necessary equipment and materials at each emergency monitoring center in order to secure their functionality in the event of a nuclear disaster. It also intends to enforce and reinforce the emergency monitoring systems by deploying personnel in charge of radiation monitoring to the NRA regional office.

Emergency monitoring results aggregated in the "Emergency Radiation Monitoring Information Sharing/Announcement System" used to be announced on the NRA website during the notification stage pursuant to Article 10 (1) of the Act on Special Measures Concerning Nuclear Emergency Preparedness, but the 10th NRA (on May 29, 2019) determined announcement of the measured values at ordinary times on the next system, which is due to go into in around October 2020 to facilitate the information transmission to the public in an emergency.

2-4 Accidents and Failures

The Act on the Regulation of Nuclear Source Material, Nuclear Fuel Material, and Reactors requires nuclear operators, etc. while the Act on the Regulation of Radioisotopes, etc., requires users who has been granted permission or who has given utilization notification to report accidents and failures to the NRA. Of the reports received in FY 2019, six came from nuclear operators, etc. and five from permission or notification users, etc.