COVID-19 situation Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA) Japan management

(as of 12/10/2020)

Presentation: The purpose of this paper is to present the COVID-19 management established within the Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA) Japan to handle the continuous service of the Japanese nuclear safety and radioprotection authority and the choices taken to do so.

Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA)
Japan management
of the Covid-19 situation

National background	
General	
Japanese authorities instructions regularly delivered	➢ Legislation: the Act on Special Measures for Pandemic Influenza and New Infectious Diseases Preparedness and Response (Act No. 31 of 2012) was amended to include Covid-19 as a new infectious disease on March 13 and enacted on March 14, 2020. ➢ January 30, 2020, the Japanese Prime Minister established the Novel Coronavirus Response Headquarters (the HQs) so as to plan and coordinate various countermeasures, and led administrative bodies for strengthening measures. After the law amendment above, the HQs set the basic policies for Novel Coronavirus Disease control and the government declared a state of emergency according to the law so that the government and all the prefectures could promote measures under the unified policy. ➢ Governors of each prefecture have been given the legal authority to take actual measures such as requests to stay at home and to close facilities operation in accordance with the amended law, which are without punishments or strong enforcement measures.
Clearly established and regularly updated provisions	➢ The Prime Minister declared a state of emergency on April 7 specifying concerned 7 prefectures and the duration (from April 7 to May 6). ➢ The areas subject to the declaration were expanded to all prefectures in Japan on April 16. ➢ On May 4, the duration of declaration was extended to the end of May. ➢ On May 14, the declaration was lifted for 39 prefectures. 8 remaining prefectures including Tokyo and Osaka have densely populated cities, and still need to suppress human contacts and inter-reginal travels. ➢ The HQs has decided the basic policies which includes: ・ to avoid close physical contacts; ・ to suppress unnecessary going-out and inter-regional travels; ・ to control operation of facilities; ・ to promote working-at-home /teleworking to 70% of staff. ➢ In line with the above governmental decisions, prefecture governors have taken measures such as: ・ requesting the citizens to strictly refrain from going out without essential errands or work;

	・ requesting companies/entities to close their facilities, suspend events or any gathering, and strongly promote teleworking ; ・ requesting schools to close down. ➢ On May 25, the declaration of a state of emergency has been lifted in all prefectures. ➢ With continuous general cares to prevent infection, prefecture governors will gradually relax their requests to the regions, considering their situation of infection and medical preparedness.
NRA	
Provisions for the NRA	Measures are decided by the NRA Commission/Secretariat taking into consideration the Japanese governmental policies decided by the HQs as well as requests by prefecture governors and countermeasures at nuclear facilities.
Contingency plan	NRA established the business continuity plan (BCP) against novel influenza in 2014. In line with the BCP, NRA set up the Novel Coronavirus Response Headquarters in March and have taken/strengthen/amend measures flexibly in response to the situation and governmental decisions.
Staff of NRA	1277 employees as of May 15 (81 % are professional staff ; 9% are technical advisors and 10% are administrative assisstants.) The NRA headquarters is located in the central area of Tokyo, where special alert had been declared, and approximately 85% of NRA staff is based at the HQs office. Most of the NRA regional offices as well as the nuclear power stations are apart from densely populated regions where special alert had been declared.
Missions of the NRA	
Sustained missions	The NRA BCP stipulates 3 categories of the missions: 1) the mission to be continued as high priority 2) the missions to be continued without substantial delay 3) Other missions On March 26, in line with the BCP, the NRA decided tasks which fall under 1), 2) and 3), such as: 1) countermeasures against Coronavirus to maintain emergency preparedness, e.g. analysis of situations, coordination with other governmental organizations, countermeasures to avoid infection; 2) emergency response shift, work associated with budget requesting and the Diet, safety/security/safeguards inspections, licensing 3) others including technical research activities
Currently	The NRA has maintained 1), and 2) to the extent possible, and minimized 3).

Key activities	**Commission meeting**: had been held with frequency reduced from weekly to bi-weekly, webcasted as usual but without physical public attendance since April. With the end of the state of emergency, the meeting will be held once a week from June, with physical public attendance and webcasting. **Public information**: on-going with adjusted procedures. Chairman press conference is held with frequency reduced from weekly to bi-weekly and NRA's secretariat media briefing is maintained once or twice a week. With the end of the state of emergency, Chairman press conference will be held once a week, and NRA's secretariat media briefing twice a week as usual. **Licensing review:** Review meetings are on-going basically by videoconference and continue to be open to the public through webcasting. For matters unsuitable for videoconference because of unsecure communication (e.g. countermeasures for terrorism), the review is continued through letter exchanges. The letters are partly published considering their contents on security. Licensing review by document is also continued with countermeasures against infection, e.g. use of videoconference system for hearings from licensees/applicants. **Inspection** (see hereafter) **Standard development and technical research:** continued by teleworking **Emergency preparedness and response :** • Day and night shift at the office and stand-by shift are maintained. Staff engaged in emergency shift have official phones to be reached. • Entry into ERC (Emergency Response Center) is prohibited unless in case of emergency. Entry into ERC will be allowed only for exercises to be prepared for an emergency • Chief emergency response staff for each function group are divided into two groups so as not to have physical contacts. • Staff in regional offices are grouped in two so as not to have physical contacts. • Workplaces are dispersed to avoid simultaneous infection of emergency response staff. • Backup staff are designated in case of infection of the staffs for accident and trouble response.
Inspections	
Safety Inspections	
Routine inspections by regional inspectors	• Relaxed; regional inspectors at each regional office are divided into two groups not to have physical contacts, and as far as inspectors are available, daily inspections such as facility walk-down are

	continued. With the end of the state of emergency, the effort was relaxed since June. • From April 1st, the new revised oversight program started with the operation stated above.
Inspections by inspectors from the NRA HQs	• Refrain from sending inspectors from the HQs; alternatively confirm records at the HQs and/or place regional inspectors instead. • When inspectors from the HQs enter into nuclear facilities since late April, they have to stay at hotels around the facilities for two weeks before inspection to confirm their health condition. With the end of the state of emergency, this quarantine measure is relaxed since June to conform to the licensee's and regional operational guidance. • Team inspections under the new oversight program are currently rescheduled in accordance with licensees work postponement described below.
Security Inspections	
Inspections by inspectors from the NRA HQs	Annually arrange schedule for security inspection at the beginning of Japanese fiscal year (April); this year, taking into consideration the situation of Covid-19, this arrangement continues. When inspectors from the HQs enter into nuclear facilities since late April, they have to stay at hotels around the facilities for two weeks before inspection to confirm their health condition. With the end of the state of emergency, this quarantine measure is relaxed from June to conform to the licensee's and regional operational guidance.
Safeguards Inspections	
Routine inspections by designated organization	• In response to the IAEA's position to continue all necessary safeguards activities in Japan, Nuclear Material Control Center (NMCC), designated organization by law, has organized two groups for each division in all three branches (the HQs, Tokai and Rokkasho); two groups work alternately at office or from home to minimize the possibility of shutdown of their divisions. After June, that was cancelled at NMCC Tokai and Rokkasho. After July, that was also cancelled at NMCC HQ. • NMCC Tokai and Rokkasho inspectors conduct only routine inspections respectively in Ibaraki and Aomori areas in order to reduce the risk of infection due to the business trip. Currently, NMCC Tokai and Rokkasho conducts all inspection activities as the same way as before. • NMCC HQ inspectors conduct all inspection activities outside of Ibaraki and Aomori areas. Currently, NMCC HQ conducts all inspection activities as the same way as before.
Verification or Complementary Access by inspectors from the NRA HQs	• In response to the IAEA's position to continue all necessary safeguards activities in Japan, Japan Safeguards Office (JSGO) of NRA has organized two groups for the HQs; two groups work alternately at office or from home to minimize possibility of its shutdown. After July, that was cancelled at JSGO HQ. • There are no changes for DIV and CA conducted by the HQs and Rokkasho office.

RI Safety and Security Inspections	
Inspections by inspectors from the registered organizations and the NRA HQs	• Inspections which frequency or period are decided by the RI Act are continued by the registered organizations. • On the other hand, the NRA has decided to reasonably and flexibly manage the frequency or period of regular inspections and reports that the RI Act requires licensees to implement, when it is unavoidable to prevent infectious diseases. • Postponed inspections to be conducted by inspectors from the NRA HQs; their frequency or period are not specified by law.
NRA Daily running	
Staff	
Teleworking	Teleworking was requested by Prime Minister and prefecture governor. Thus, in principle, NRA employees had worked remotely from home since late March. The number of employees who come to the office was limited according to necessity of Category 1) and 2) in the BCP, so that about 70% of staff wer working at home. With the end of the state of emergency, currently, NRA recommends the staff to work at home 4 times in a month.
Segregation	To mitigate the impact of Coronavirus infection, the NRA avoided physical contacts to the extent maximum; each office separates employees into 2 teams and, even when necessary, members of 2 teams come to the office alternately.
Specific cases	NRA employees with necessity of caring children because of school close-down, are allowed to take special paid leaves.
Confirmed cases of infection	There is an infected employee in the NRA as of October 12.
Material	
Personal computer	In line with th the NRA information security policy, the NRA has promoted teleworking both by distributed official PCs and private PCs ; private PCs can only deal with low-confidential information while distributed official PCs can deal with higher-confidentil information.The NRA have distributed official PCs for teleworkig to about 40% of the staff.
Phones	Staff engaged in emergency shift have official mobile phones – not enough available for all staff.
Others	• Remote access to NRA LAN/ Emails: available, in addition to distributed PCs, 40% of the staff have access to NRA email through their mobile phones. • Video conferences: The NRA has introduced web-conference systems such as Webex and Skype for business, and has extensively utilized them for meetings with external stakeholders as well as internal meetings.
Communication with stakeholders	
Paper mail	Still ensured as usual.

Meetings	Commission meeting and licensing review meeting are as mentioned above. The other meetings with external stakeholders are held to the extent possible basically by videoconference.

Licensees Measures

NPPs

- Most of the nuclear power stations in Japan are located outside the emergency declaration prefectures, and also apart from densely populated regions.
- Every operating NPP licensee in Japan has already developed their own action plan in accordance to "Guideline for Pandemic Influenza Preparedness at Business Entities and Establishments" established by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare on 2007-03-26.
- The action plans stipulate the measures to ensure the health of employees of the NPP licensees and stable supply of electricity with safety as the highest priority.
- Any personnel other than the operator is not allowed to enter the main control room in principle (excluding inspectors).
- Confirmed cases of infection: 2 construction workers at Genkai site; 2 employee at Kashiwazaki-Kariwa site.
- Actions taken by the licensee are as follows: temperature measurement; encouraging to wear masks, wash and sanitize hands; prohibiting or minimizing outsiders' entrance; separating operators from other employees; restraining from business trips or meetings; fixing staggered working hours or teleworking; grouping essential employees into two, incorporating PCR testing and/or submitting movement histories for last 2 weeks into the due process for workers newly coming from other areas.
- Some of the works with contractors and/or suppliers and not inevitable for nuclear safety are postponed.
- Construction/modification works have been stopped at some sites.
- There are also some licensees who have voluntarily decided to prolong outage period and delay related works.

Other nuclear facilities

- Most other nuclear-related operating licensees in Japan, like NPP licensee, have already developed their own action plan in accordance to "Guideline for Pandemic Influenza Preparedness at Business Entities and Establishments" established by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare on 2007-03-26.
- The action plans stipulate the measures to ensure the health of employees of the licensees and stable supply of their products or services with safety as the highest priority.
- Actions taken by the licensee are as follows: temperature measurement; encouraging to wear masks, wash and sanitize hands; prohibiting or minimizing outsiders' entrance; separating operators from other employees; restraining from business trips or meetings; fixing staggered working hours or teleworking; grouping essential employees into two to work alternately.
- Construction works have been stopped at some sites.
- Activities (such as research) have been stopped at some facilities, for which the NRA has relaxed the frequency of the required foot patrol inspection by operators.

- In terms of TEPCO’s Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station (1F site), similar measures are taken; however, almost all the decommissioning works continue with decreased human contacts.
- No infections of staff have been confirmed in 1F site for both TEPCO’s employees and contractors’ workers there.