

U.S.NRC

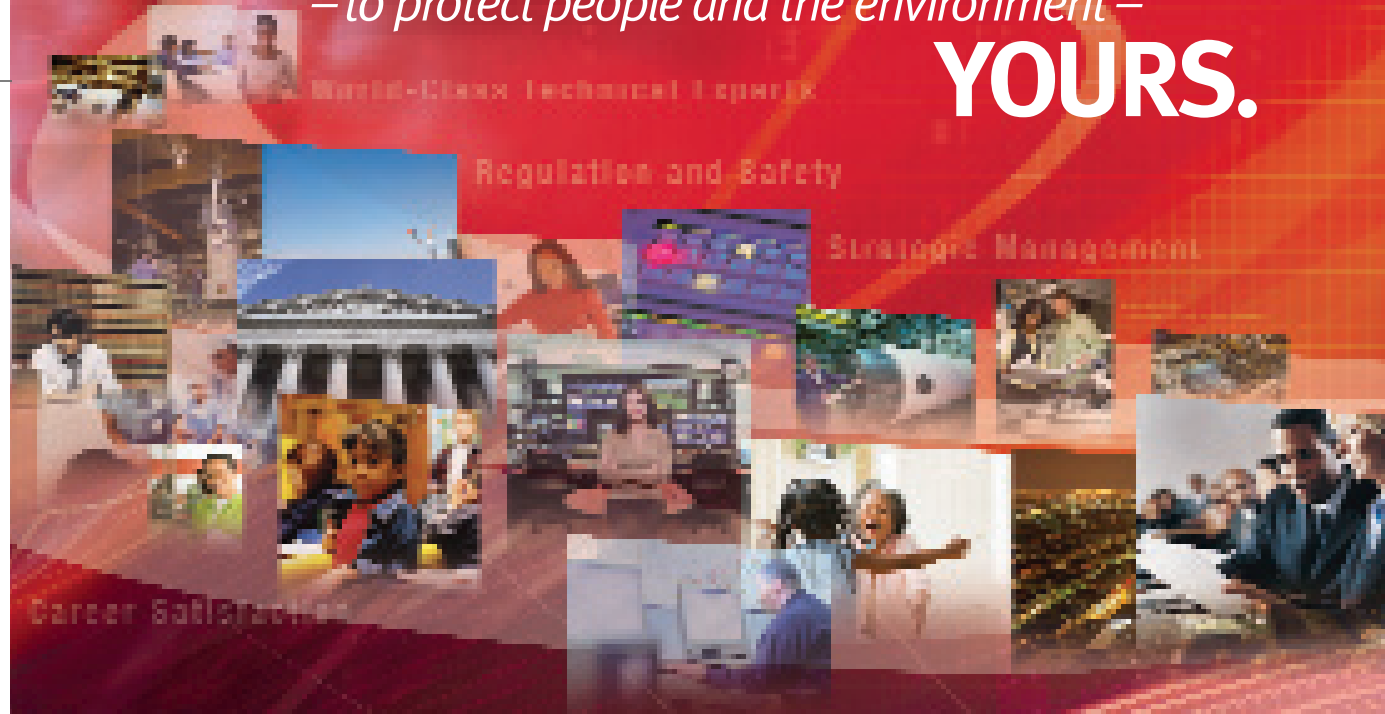
UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
Protecting People and the Environment

www.nrc.gov

MAKE OUR MISSION

– to protect people and the environment –

YOURS.



THE HONOR LAW GRADUATE PROGRAM

MAKE OUR MISSION YOURS.



The NRC Honor Law Graduate Program affords graduating law students and judicial law clerks of ability and potential a unique opportunity to begin or continue their legal careers in an exciting and rewarding field of law that will involve them in many of the major issues facing the Nation. Such experience equips members of the program for exciting challenges in the practice of law. We look forward to your application.

Karen D. Cyr, General Counsel (Former Honor Law Graduate)

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is a point of convergence for far-reaching issues of law, technology, energy policy, environmental concerns, and the role of the public in decision-making. The push and pull of conflicting views and varied approaches—from the public, Congress, and the scientific and technical community—frame the issues on which NRC attorneys work every day.

As an independent regulatory agency, the NRC functions both in an administrative capacity, supervising the civilian uses of nuclear energy and materials, and in a quasi-judicial role, as an adjudicator of licensing and enforcement cases. As a result, the Commission's lawyers are exposed to a broad range of substantive issues and to many aspects of legal practice. NRC attorneys serve as counsel for the NRC's technical staff in licensing and enforcement cases at the trial and appellate levels; develop the rules to which Commission licensees must conform; prepare briefs defending Commission decisions; argue cases in the United States Courts of Appeals and sometimes District Courts; and advise and counsel the

Commission on contracts, personnel, security, labor relations, the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act, and intellectual property. NRC lawyers have helped draft agreements for international cooperation in the nuclear field and have helped the agency to strengthen its security oversight program in response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.



Unique in the Federal Government, the NRC is a point of convergence for far-reaching issues of law, technology, energy policy, environmental concerns, and the role of the public in decision-making.

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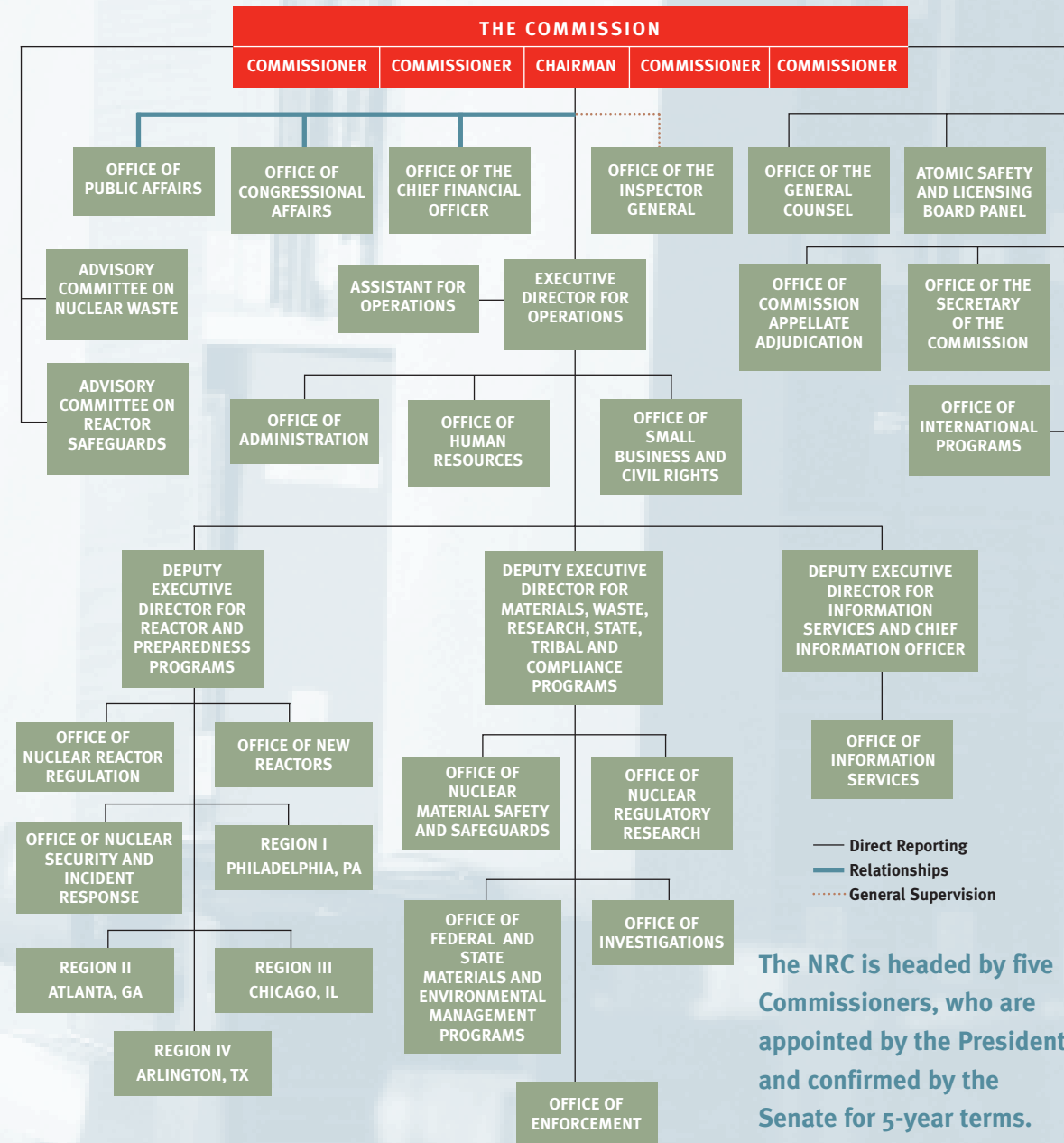
THE U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Congress created the NRC in 1975, when it abolished the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) and divided its responsibilities between two new agencies that ultimately became the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the NRC. The NRC was given an exclusively regulatory mission, and it carried over the existing body of AEC regulations for the protection of health, safety, and the environment. Promotion and development of nuclear and other energy sources were assigned to DOE. The NRC's establishment reflected the judgment of Congress that, for a combination of reasons involving technology and economics as well as public perception, the time had come to create an independent agency in which there could be no real or apparent conflict between the regulation and promotion of nuclear energy.

Congress chose the five-member Commission format for the NRC to ensure a variety of expertise, viewpoint, and political affiliation, and to ensure stability in policies. Members of the Commission are appointed

by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate. Members serve 5-year staggered terms, not at the pleasure of the President. However, the President designates one of the Commissioners to serve as Chairman, at the pleasure of the President.

The primary mission of the NRC is to regulate the Nation's civilian use of byproduct, source, and special nuclear material to ensure adequate protection of the public health and safety, to promote the common defense and security, and to protect the environment. To carry out this mission, the NRC has developed a comprehensive program of regulation, licensing, and enforcement. Within the framework of this program, the NRC promulgates regulations and orders governing the use of nuclear facilities and materials, reviews the technical accuracy and sufficiency of applications for nuclear power plant and nuclear materials licenses under those regulations and orders, holds public hearings in connection with licensing matters, inspects licensed activities, and takes enforcement actions, which may give rise to public hearings.



The NRC is headed by five Commissioners, who are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate for 5-year terms.

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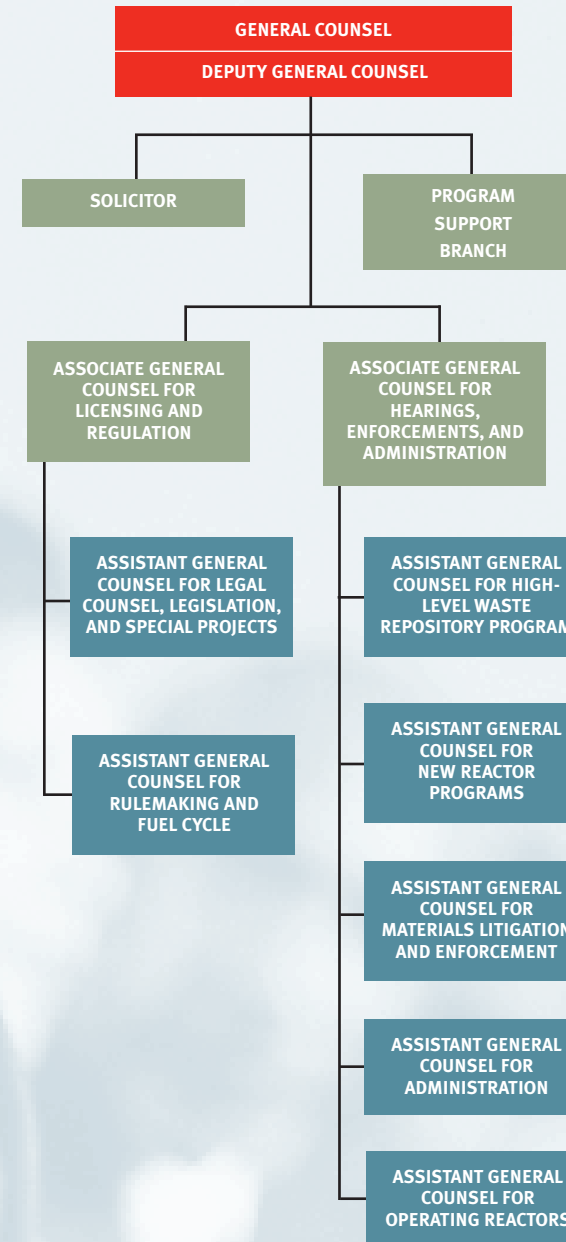


THE OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

The General Counsel is the chief legal officer and legal advisor to the Commission. The Office of the General Counsel (OGC) at NRC headquarters employs approximately 80 attorneys. Primary responsibilities entail providing legal advice and counsel to the Commissioners and staff and representing the NRC in litigation before agency tribunals and in Federal courts. Attorneys are assigned to one of several divisions, each headed by an Assistant General Counsel, who are responsible for carrying out the various functions of the office. The divisions report to the General Counsel through two Associate General Counsels. The Solicitor has primary responsibility in matters involving the supervision of litigation in courts of law. The Solicitor represents the NRC in litigation in Federal Courts of Appeals and in conjunction with the Justice Department in other Federal courts. The NRC is one of the few Federal agencies that is authorized by statute to represent itself in Federal Courts of Appeals and in conjunction with the Department of Justice in other Federal Courts.

There are seven divisions within the Office of the General Counsel:

- Assistant General Counsel for Legal Counsel, Legislation, and Special Projects
- Assistant General Counsel for Rulemaking and Fuel Cycle
- Assistant General Counsel for Administration
- Assistant General Counsel for High Level Waste Repository Program
- Assistant General Counsel for Materials Litigation and Enforcement
- Assistant General Counsel for New Reactor Programs
- Assistant General Counsel for Operating Reactors



THE HONOR LAW GRADUATE PROGRAM

The NRC selects a small number of graduating law students or judicial law clerks to participate in the Honor Law Graduate Program. The program is designed to attract outstanding individuals who wish to begin their legal career in a Federal agency with an array of important and challenging opportunities to serve the public and gain valuable experience in the practice of law.

The Rotational Program.

Participants in the Honor Law Graduate Program serve in the Office of the General Counsel. The 2-year program is a prelude to a continuing permanent career as an attorney in OGC. Those selected for the 2-year

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program work in a probationary status. After successfully completing the program, they are assigned to a division under one of the Assistant General Counsels, without having to reapply. Participants in the Honor Law Graduate Program are assigned directly to the Deputy General Counsel. To give them broad exposure to the diverse fields of legal practice at the NRC, they are assigned to 3 or 4 rotations over the 2-year period in different divisions of the office.

8 | **Work Assignments.**

During the rotational program, participants are given the same types of assignments as other attorneys in the division. For example, Honor Law Graduates may be assigned to administrative litigation involving nuclear power plants or nuclear materials. Honor Law Graduates may work with the Solicitor in researching and preparing briefs for submission to the Federal Courts of Appeals. Participants work with the technical staff in reviewing draft environmental impact statements and proposed regulations to adopt new or revised safety standards.

Others may assist in the review and litigation of personnel actions, equal employment opportunity cases, and government contract matters.

Mentoring and Training.

Honor Law Graduates are assigned a peer mentor who is a current or recent participant in the program. A senior mentor may also be assigned to the participant during each rotational assignment. Participants receive orientation and familiarization with the technical aspects of nuclear regulation. In addition, participants have opportunities to continue their education by taking courses in the Washington area and elsewhere. These courses strengthen participants' skills in trial and appellate practice, environmental law, procurement law, personnel law, and administrative law. Participants may hear oral arguments before the Federal Courts or attend Congressional hearings. Participants may also visit licensed facilities, attend specialized Bar conferences, and take part in meetings with Federal and State Officials.

The work of OGC attorneys is supported by a fully staffed and amply equipped law library. Attorneys are provided computer equipment and have access to commercial legal databases, as well as the Internet.

RECRUITMENT

The NRC conducts its own recruitment process for the Honor Law Graduate Program, independent of any other Federal recruitment programs. To be considered for NRC employment, participants do not need to have a Civil Service grade rating, and they do not need to take an examination given by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.



“Consistently, senior attorneys and staff members are willing to share their knowledge of law, the administrative process, and NRC policy.”

QUALIFICATIONS

Generally, only those students who are in the upper 30 percent of their law school class are eligible for consideration. This criterion may be waived for applicants with unusual compensating qualifications, such as other academic degrees or pertinent work experience.

In addition, to be considered for the program, applicants must either be third-year law students who will earn the degree no later than June of the academic year of application, graduate law students in the last year of study, or judicial law clerks who will be prepared to report for duty no later than the end of September of the year following application. In addition, graduate law students and judicial clerks must not have any significant post-J.D. employment preceding graduate study or the clerkship.

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All candidates should be aware that OGC attorneys and certain other NRC employees, and their spouses and minor children, cannot own any stocks, bonds, or other financial interests in certain entities regulated by the NRC or closely associated with activities regulated by the NRC. A list of these entities—mostly power reactor licensees and fuel cycle facilities—is readily available. A new employee in the program who is subject to this restriction has 90 days from the date of appointment to divest any prohibited securities that the employee, the employee’s spouse, or the employee’s minor children may own. The tax consequences of divestiture can be deferred.

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Finally, only U.S. citizens can be admitted to the program. Each person admitted must undergo a complete security investigation and be granted a security clearance. The clearance generally does not come until sometime during the person’s first year in the program.

Admission to the Bar is not a prerequisite, but is expected during the first year of NRC employment. A person selected for the program who is not admitted to the Bar within a year of reporting for duty cannot expect to remain at the agency.

Admission to the Bar of the highest court of any jurisdiction in the United States will satisfy the retention requirement and will permit the NRC attorney to represent the U.S. Government in Federal court.

SELECTION FOR THE HONOR LAW GRADUATE PROGRAM

All candidates who have the required qualifications are considered for the program. Appointment is based solely on merit. It is the policy of the NRC to provide equal opportunity for all employees and applicants for employment, and to prohibit discrimination based on race, color, gender, national origin, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, or reprisal for participation in any activity protected by the various civil rights statutes. Eligible veterans are accorded the preference granted to them by the Veterans’ Preference Act of 1944. OGC encourages all qualified persons to apply.

In selecting members for the program, the NRC evaluates each individual’s academic achievement, writing and research skills, advocacy skills, and developmental experiences.

Specific consideration is given to an individual’s law school academic record and activities, including law review, moot court, and legal aid; law clerk employment; writing samples; the results of reference checks and personal interviews by NRC attorneys; and any other factors that may indicate the individual’s potential to develop into an outstanding attorney.

Technical or scientific training or experience is not a requirement for admission to the program. However, an interest in technical or scientific matters, or some background in such matters, can add to an attorney’s experience at the NRC.

In selecting program members, the NRC uses a three-step procedure. First, the NRC evaluates the applications submitted by interested law students or law clerks, conducts preliminary interviews at selected law schools and job fairs, or both. These evaluations and interviews take place from August through October. Second, the NRC invites the most promising applicants to visit the agency’s headquarters in Rockville,

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Maryland, for interviews with NRC attorneys. These interviews are conducted during October and November. Third, the NRC makes its final selection of candidates. This selection is usually completed by December 1.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

Grade and Salary Levels. Salary policies and practices seek to motivate and reward employees for their initiative and outstanding performance. Federal grade and salary levels used at NRC are directly related to the qualifications and experience the attorney brings to the position being filled. Special salary schedules are in effect for entry-level attorneys. Members of the program normally start at grade GG-11, Step 10.

Promotions. After 1 year of satisfactory performance, and assuming that the attorney has passed the Bar examination, a member of the program is eligible for a promotion to grade GG-12, Step 6. After two years of satisfactory performance, an attorney is eligible for promotion to grade GG-13, Step 3. Promotions to GG-14 and 15 are competitive.

Periodic Pay Increments and Awards.

Periodic pay increments within grades are based on acceptable performance and conduct after specified periods of service. In recognition of outstanding accomplishments, the NRC offers a variety of monetary awards.

Other Incentives. A recruitment bonus may be authorized. The NRC may also pay a portion of an employee's Federally guaranteed student loans as a retention incentive. Such bonuses and loan repayments incur a service obligation.

Retirement. Newly hired Federal employees are covered by the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS), a three-tiered plan that includes Social Security, a basic Federal annuity, and the Thrift Savings Plan, in which the Government matches employee contributions.

Health Benefits. This voluntary program protects Government employees and their families from some of the costs of illness or accident. Employees can choose from a number of major health plans. If employees do not enroll when they are hired, they will have another opportunity during an open season period (usually late Fall). The NRC pays a portion of the premium for these plans. NRC employees are also eligible to

participate in the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program and the Federal Flexible Benefits Plan.

Group Life Insurance. The NRC pays a portion of the premium for basic life insurance. The amount of coverage depends on the employee's age and annual salary (rounded to the highest thousand plus \$2000). Additional optional coverage is available to the employee and the employee's spouse and children. Participation in the insurance program is voluntary.

Work Schedule. Employees can select the work schedule they prefer—"Flexitime" (ten 8-hour weekdays per 2-week pay period with flexible starting and ending times) or "Compressed Work Schedule" (eight 9-hour weekdays and one 8-hour weekday per 2-week pay period, with flexible starting and ending times and one weekday off). Many employees find that a 3-day weekend in every pay period is a significant benefit.



Vacation (Annual Leave). Employees with fewer than 3 years of service receive 13 days of leave each year; those with 3 – 15 years of service receive 20 days of leave each year; and those with 15 years of service and more receive 26 days of leave each year. The maximum carryover from one year to the next is 30 days.

Sick Leave. Regardless of length of service, employees earn 13 days of sick leave each year. Employees may use sick leave for absence due to illness, injury, or pregnancy and confinement, or for scheduled medical and dental appointments, with no limit on accumulation. Employees may also use sick leave to take a family member to a physician or dentist.

Holidays. Employees enjoy 10 recognized Federal holidays off with pay each year.

Credit Union. The Credit Union is a full-service financial institution. Membership is optional.

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Fitness and Health. A modern Fitness Center, staffed by trained professionals and furnished with state-of-the-art exercise equipment, is available at low cost to employees at headquarters. For runners and joggers, the NRC also has changing rooms, lockers, and showers. For those who cycle to work, the NRC provides bicycle racks inside the building. After-hours exercise classes are also available.

The Health Center offers NRC employees at headquarters a comprehensive health maintenance program. A physician and nurses are on duty Monday through Friday.

RELOCATION COSTS AND ARRANGEMENTS

The NRC may be able to reimburse members of the program for such relocation expenses as moving costs.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply for the Honor Law Graduate Program, submit the following:

1. A résumé;
2. A list of 3 references;
3. A copy of your law school transcript. (Please attach your school's grading system explanation, if available.)
4. A sample of your legal writing, unedited by anyone else.

Applications will be accepted from July 15 – October 15. Please submit all required material by October 15 by e-mail to HonorLaw@nrc.gov or by mail to the following address:

Recruiting & Professional Development Coordinator
Mail Stop O-15 D21
Office of the General Counsel
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001

You will join the agency consistently ranked as one of "The Best Places To Work In The Federal Government."*

Employment applicants must be U.S. citizens; be able to receive an NRC security clearance; have strong academic credentials; and where necessary, possess the appropriate work experience.

The NRC provides reasonable accommodation to applicants with disabilities where appropriate. If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process, please

notify the Disability Program Coordinator at: 301-415-7111 (TDD 301-415-2100). Determination on requests for reasonable accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis.

The NRC is a "zero-tolerance" agency with regard to illegal drug usage.

*According to the Partnership for Public Service and American University's Institute for the Study of Public Policy Implementation (ISPP). www.bestplacestowork.org

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NUREG/BR-0018 Rev. 14
August 2007