

**Plain Writing Act Compliance
Annual Report
April 13, 2012**

Dissemination

In response to the Plain Writing Act of 2010, an action memorandum from the Executive Director for Operations instructed all managers to familiarize themselves with the requirements of the Act, and to encourage staff to take appropriate training. Staff are reminded to use plain language through periodic articles in the agency's in-house newsletter, the *NRC Reporter*. The Commission has also directed staff to make greater use of plain language when speaking to the public about high profile events, such as the nuclear accident at Fukushima-Daiichi in Japan.

Action Plan

The NRC identified the following documents that should be the focus of plain writing: Performance Assessments, Generic Communications, Inspection Reports, and Significant Enforcement Actions. These are stored in the agency's Agencywide Documents Access & Management System database and are accessible through the public web site and the Public Document Room in Rockville, MD. In cases where a document is necessarily technically complex, employees are instructed to provide a plain language cover memo or abstract. We are also considering focusing on the following items: Regulation Abstracts, Regulation Forwards, Information Papers, and Agency Policy Statements.

Web site

Consistent with the Act's requirements, the NRC created a section of our public website that outlines our Plain Writing Action plan and also offers general guidance on plain writing at the NRC. This annual report (and all subsequent annual reports) will be posted there.

Training

The NRC already offered an online course, "Business Writing: How to Write Clearly and Concisely," that was available to all staff. In response to the Act, the NRC created a new online course, specifically tailored to the Plain Writing guidance issued by the Office of Management and Budget, which all staff are encouraged to take. For employees who devote substantial time to writing documents read by the public, a more intensive 2-day instructor-led course, "Writing in Plain English," is also offered. In the last twelve months, 349 staff have taken at least one of these courses.

Stakeholder Feedback

The NRC has a long-standing commitment to openness and transparency. Within the past year, the agency has implemented new subscription-based services on our public Web site to enable stakeholders to keep abreast of the most current agency news and activities. We've enhanced stakeholder involvement in public meetings by expanding the use of Web event and virtual meeting technologies, and furthered collaboration within industry and Government workgroups by using Web conferencing technologies. We have also introduced new interactive mechanisms for stakeholder engagement, including four successful social media technologies: the NRC Blog, a Twitter feed, a YouTube channel, and a Flickr photo gallery. The NRC blog has attracted 170,000 views and generated 1,000 approved comments, including comments on the readability of NRC documents. Currently, a new pilot project is being developed that will attach an interactive "widget" to some of the agency's most widely read online documents, to gather additional feedback from stakeholders on the documents' readability.