

The Research Institute for Energy and Nuclear Technology in Norway is an independent foundation established in 1948 with departments at Kjeller and in Halden. With a staff of about 550, IFE is an international research centre for nuclear and energy technology.

IFE's nuclear technology comprises all activities that are directly or indirectly related to the Institute's two research reactors, in Halden and at Kjeller.

Authority audits – from an operator's point of view

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The national authorities set requirements to the operators of nuclear installations. These requirements shall ensure that the operator operates their facilities so that they do not cause any damage to human and the environment, as specified in national legislation. Within the international community there is a comprehensive cooperation to formulate safety recommendations with regard to design and operation of nuclear installations. Of course it should also be mentioned the bilateral and multilateral agreements within the international community which commits the nations to have a legislation according to the agreements. In addition the customers sets their requirements to ensure that the products being produced or developed fulfil the specifications. The customer audits is not a topic of this paper.

The national authorities use inter alia, audits to follow up that the operators fulfil the requirements. It is often said that to be audited is a positive venue, because the audits gives the operator the possibility to improve his quality system. This is true. But it is equally true that the authority should use their gained knowledge and experience from audits to improve their auditing system. The improvement on both sides is important because the safety depends of the operator's safety system and safety culture, and the inter alia the professionalism and skill ness of the authority.

The operators of nuclear facilities are used to be subject for authorities audits and inspections. A close follow up from the authorities not only to see if the requirements are in compliance with the requirements, but also for public acceptance and confidence is important for the industry.

Every audit should be performed according to a plan and scope to ensure that the audit can be conducted in a way that both the authority and operator has agreed upon. This will help to establish a good atmosphere and mutual confidence during the audit. An audit can cause stress for some of the employees at the operating organisation being part of the audit. Especially the employees that are not so familiar to meet the authorities can read an audit or inspection as an exam. To help the employees the operator should inform and involve the whole or the relevant parts of the organisation in the preparation of an audit.

The paper will mainly discuss the experiences IFE has with audits performed by authorities. Basis for the paper will be the operation of the two research reactors and the other nuclear facilities, operated by IFE.