

AEC Draws Up Official Opinion about Earthquake Response

On August 7, the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) drew up its official opinion about the responses to be made by plant operators and the national government vis-a-vis the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa Nuclear Power Station, following last month's earthquake.

The opinion is made up of six items, as follows: (1) giving appropriate information to both the domestic and worldwide audience, (2) sharing knowledge and experience with the international community, (3) swiftly confirming seismic safety, (4) organizing a response manual for earthquakes, (5) immediately reflecting of new knowledge in regulatory standards, etc., and (6) steadily executing operational risk-management activities with a view toward the stable supply of electricity.

As for the first item on the list – giving appropriate information – AEC called upon plant operators to inform the public about pertinent facts in a swift and accurate manner, while calling upon the Nuclear Industrial and Safety Agency (NISA) to relay its evaluations to the public in an easily understandable fashion. As far as the sharing of knowledge and experience with the international community is concerned, then, the Commission called for complete cooperation with investigations conducted by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as well as for international conferences to be held.

Regarding the third item on the list – the swift confirmation of seismic safety – AEC wants priority to be given to the building of a framework in which important information can be gained relevant to the judgment of safety, and that appropriate explanations then be given to the residents of neighboring communities. Meanwhile, the earthquake-response manual that AEC wants to have drawn up is to include mention of a division of labor with the local community as well as a public-relations response.

As for the fifth item – immediately reflecting new knowledge in regulatory standards – the Commission demanded that activities be boosted that could be positioned as administrative (governmental) risk-management efforts. Also, with a view to the stable supply of electricity, AEC said that the plant operators ought to enhance the organization of their management and carry out periodic safety reviews so as to enable the quick refurbishment and modification of facilities whenever new knowledge is found, as well as to steadily implement risk-management activities.

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