THE DMCC ASSIST VISIT PROGRAM[1]

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ABSTRACT

The U.S. Department of Energy Meteorological Coordinating Council (DMCC) Assist Visit Program is a vital function of the DMCC. The purpose of the Assist Visit is to provide DOE funded meteorological programs with a no-fault assessment of the quality of the support they provide to the respective DOE field office or DOE operating unit. Focus of the Assist Visit is on the adequacy of the local meteorological monitoring program, the quality of the acquired data, the relevance and application of the data to operational issues, caliber of any supporting research, qualifications and training of personnel, and adequacy of facilities.

Each Assist Visit is preceded by a preliminary overview of the program and mission which is supplied by the customer. This pre-assist assessment permits DMCC management to assess the scope of the visit, to prepare for the visit, to select the appropriate Assist Visit Team, and coordinate the visit with the customer. The actual Assist Visit begins with an "In-briefing" to all stakeholders, describing the DMCC mission and the assessment process. The customer provides the DMCC with a presentation describing the meteorological program mission, operational authorities, and DOE oversight responsibility. Focus is on how the meteorological program addresses issues related to personnel safety, health, and protection of the environment; including compliance with DOE Orders and guidelines, the Clean Air Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and other applicable environmental laws and enabling regulations.

Meteorological instrumentation is examined with regard to proper resolution of pertinent atmospheric processes that impact daily as well as potential emergency operations. Instrument functionality and exposure are assessed. Meteorological data communications networks are analyzed. Linkages between data custodians and customers are examined. Proper delivery and use of meteorological data in consequence assessment and emergency response models is reviewed; especially with regard to air flow and transport trajectories in complex terrain locations. Related research activities are evaluated for relevance to the mission and potential future programmatic needs. Opportunities for management, operational, and technical improvements are identified.

Each Assist Visit is concluded with a "De-briefing" with the customer to identify the positive aspects of the assessment as well as any concerns the Assist Visit Team might have. A draft report is then prepared and provided to customer for review prior to preparation of the final report. Follow-up consultations are provided as requested by the customer. ASSIST visits have been completed at four DOE sites; resulting in positive program changes. Future visits are being scheduled.

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[1] To be presented at the Nuclear Utilities Meteorological Data Users Group Meeting in Syracuse, NY, May 12-12, 1999.