

WEAPON QUALITY ASSURANCE (WQA) BULLETIN

NNSA WEAPON QUALITY DIVISION (NA-121.3)

October 2021



Nonconforming Material Report (NMR) Process Improvements

NNSA Policy (NAP) 401.1, *Weapon Quality Policy*, Attachment 3, Section 4.1.4, *Nonconforming Material Report Process*, lists requirements for the identification, notification, and disposition of suspect or nonconforming material that is shipped between NNSA sites. The requirements listed, however, do not explicitly describe the process that is expected to be followed, and this has led to inconsistencies in the implementation of the NMR process across the NNSA.

The NMR process has recently been reviewed by a working group consisting of members from each Management and Operating (M&O) site and Field/Production Office within the WQA community. The working group developed improvements to the NMR process to allow for consistent implementation of NAP 401.1 process steps, which are described in this bulletin.

Key improvements are as follows:

- **Revised NMR Form**: Developed as an aid for Field Offices to consistently gather the appropriate information throughout the NMR process as well as allow for easy entry into a fillable form.
- **Process Map**: Developed an NMR Process Map as an aid for Field Offices and M&Os to consistently work through the NMR process steps.
- **Incoming Material Request (IMR)/Shipped Material Request (SMR) combined into NMR**: The Shipping Field Office (S-FO) associated with the Production Agency responsible for the affected product will determine whether a nonconformance exists and will generate and track all NMRs regardless of which site identifies the issue. Thus, the use of IMRs and SMRs as means to track who identified the nonconforming product is no longer necessary.
 - Since the IMR and SMR are no longer tracked separately, the new numbering scheme for NMRs comprises the following elements in sequence:
 - The Shipping Production Agency (S-PA) (see NAP 401.1, Appendix 3.1-G) for which the S-FO is issuing the report
 - The fiscal year (4-digit) in which the nonconformance was discovered
 - The receiving Production Agency (R-PA) (see NAP 401.1, Appendix 3.1-G) for which the Receiving Field Office (R-FO) is receiving the report
 - The next NMR number in the issuing S-FO's sequence
 - e.g., "LA-2021-SS-01" means this is the first nonconforming item identified that has shipped from Los Alamos to Sandia in FY 2021
- **Allowance for swift notification to key stakeholders**: The draft NMR, with identification of production impacts and priority level, is sent to the R-FO with a copy (for awareness) to the S-PA, R-PA, Weapon Quality Division (WQD), as well as the Federal Program Office (FPO).

➤ **Clarification of NMR Grade Levels to better align with NAP 401.1 terminology as follows:**

- Grade 1 – Failure to meet product definition requirement(s) and cannot be utilized for its intended use. A Corrective Action Response is required to prevent the recurrence of this nonconformance.
- Grade 2 – Failure to meet product definition requirement(s), but material can be used for its intended use. Corrective Action Response is required, to prevent the recurrence of this nonconformance, at the discretion of the responsible Field Office.
- Grade 3 – Product definition requirements are met, but there are issues with other quality requirements that can be corrected without impact to product (for example shipping documents are incorrect). Corrective Action Response is required, to prevent the recurrence of this nonconformance, at the discretion of the responsible Field Office.

Note: Grade 3 NMRs are documented for record purposes only and product segregation is not necessary.

This WQA Bulletin is provided by the DOE/NNSA Weapon Quality Division (NA-121.3) in response to process requirements associated with the NMR process that are not singularly interpretable. This bulletin does not change any NAP 401.1, *Weapon Quality Policy*, requirements; rather, it is intended to assist NNSA organizations in the proper interpretation and application of the NMR process for consistent implementation across the Nuclear Security Enterprise (NSE).¹

The revised NMR Form and NMR Process Map referenced in this bulletin are accessible via the NNSA Weapon Quality Collaboration Site, hosted on MAX.gov, at the following URL: [NNSA Weapon Quality Assurance Community - Dept of Energy - MAX Federal Community](#). For access to MAX.gov, please send an email to wqa@nnsa.doe.gov.



¹ The guidance provided within this bulletin does not rise to the level of an "Advance Change Directive," per NNSA SD 251.1B, since it does not "convey direction needed to meet statutory, regulatory, or programmatic requirements that are exigent in nature." Nor does the guidance fit within the "Administrative Changes" of that directive. Thus, after careful consideration, the "WQA Bulletin" was chosen as the means to convey the guidance for allowing process improvements as well as allowing broad Nuclear Security Enterprise access to the revised NMR Form and Process Map.