Approval: M. D. Gardner _____ Date: 10/12/2004
Manager, National Spent Nuclear Fuel Program

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Personnel working for the National Spent Nuclear Fuel Program (NSNFP) must follow this NSNFP procedure to resolve *quality disputes* (see glossary) when verbal reporting and/or reporting a potential condition adverse to quality, per NSNFP Procedure 16.02, has not resulted in a satisfactory resolution.

II. SUMMARY

This procedure establishes the process and responsibilities for resolving differences of opinion involving Quality Assurance (QA) Program requirements. It covers defining, documenting, and resolving quality disputes. This procedure is not intended to (a) evaluate allegations of waste, fraud, abuse, security, or personnel issues, as there are established programs to address such matters or (b) circumvent the responsibility or authority of management.

Differences of opinion involving the QA program may originate through normal work processes or emergent conditions. When these differences impact quality-affecting activities subject to the *Quality Assurance Requirements and Description* (QARD), this procedure shall be used to resolve them.

III. PROCEDURE

A. Communicating a Quality Dispute

NSNFP Personnel

1. If attempts to resolve a quality dispute through verbal reporting or reporting as a potential condition adverse to quality according to NSNFP Procedure 16.02 are unsuccessful, a Form 1.03-1, Quality Dispute, must be initiated to:

   a. Formally alert the employee's immediate manager within the NSNFP.

      (1) Determine the immediate manager by referring to the NSNFP Quality Assurance Program Plan Organization Diagram.

   b. Describe the basis of the opinion with reference to requirements of the QARD, best management practice, known interpretation of the QARD, or prior work practices.

   c. Describe the impact on past, present, or future quality-affecting activities, if known.

B. Resolving A Quality Dispute

Immediate Manager

1. Acknowledge receipt of the Quality Dispute form and attempt to resolve the difference of opinion with the originator. Consult with technical experts

Immediate Manager — regarding technical aspects of the issue and the NSNFP Quality Assurance Staff Manager (QASM) for interpretation of the QARD, as needed.

NSNFP Personnel and Immediate Manager

2. If the difference of opinion is resolved, document the resolution and acceptance using the appropriate blocks of NSNFP Form 1.03-1.

   a. If an acceptable resolution cannot be reached, escalate the dispute to successively higher levels of NSNFP management until a resolution is obtained and acceptance is documented.

   b. The Manager, NSNFP has the ultimate authority within the NSNFP to resolve a quality dispute and must be contacted as necessary to reach a timely resolution.

NSNFP Personnel

3. As deemed necessary at any time in the process, use an alternate means for reporting the dispute including but not limited to one of the following.

   a. Employee Concerns Program of the individual employee

   b. DOE Employee Concerns Program

   c. U.S. NRC Concerns Program.

Manager NSNFP

4. Monitor the progress of the internal NSNFP Quality Dispute and, as necessary to achieve a timely resolution, escalate the dispute progressively to successively higher levels of management within the DOE Idaho Operations Office (NE-ID).

Immediate Manager

5. Using Form 1.03-1, document the final resolution in the following manner and forward to the Manager, NSNFP.

   a. Document the specific resolution reached and include signed acceptance by the originator and the immediate manager.

      (1) Include a statement citing an issued NSNFP Deficiency Report(s) or issued Corrective Action Request(s) if that action comprises the agreement reached.

   b. If agreement was not reached and an alternate means of reporting was selected by the employee, so state and, if necessary, indicate that the employee's acceptance signature is not required.

C. Closing An Internal NSNFP Quality Dispute

Manager NSNFP

1. After receiving the documented final resolution from the employee's immediate manager, verify implementation of the accepted resolution as applicable.

2. Upon successful verification, close the Quality Dispute by signing Form 1.03-1.

Manager NSNFP

a. If the accepted resolution resulted in no action or agreement could not be reached and an alternate employee concerns process was initiated, so state, and close the Quality Dispute on that basis.

3. Transmit the closed Quality Dispute to NSNFP records in accordance with NSNFP Procedure 17.01.

IV. REFERENCES

None.

V. DEFINITIONS

Terms appearing in italics followed by the notation "see glossary" are defined in the NSNFP Documents Manual Introduction and Glossary.

VI. ATTACHMENTS

None.

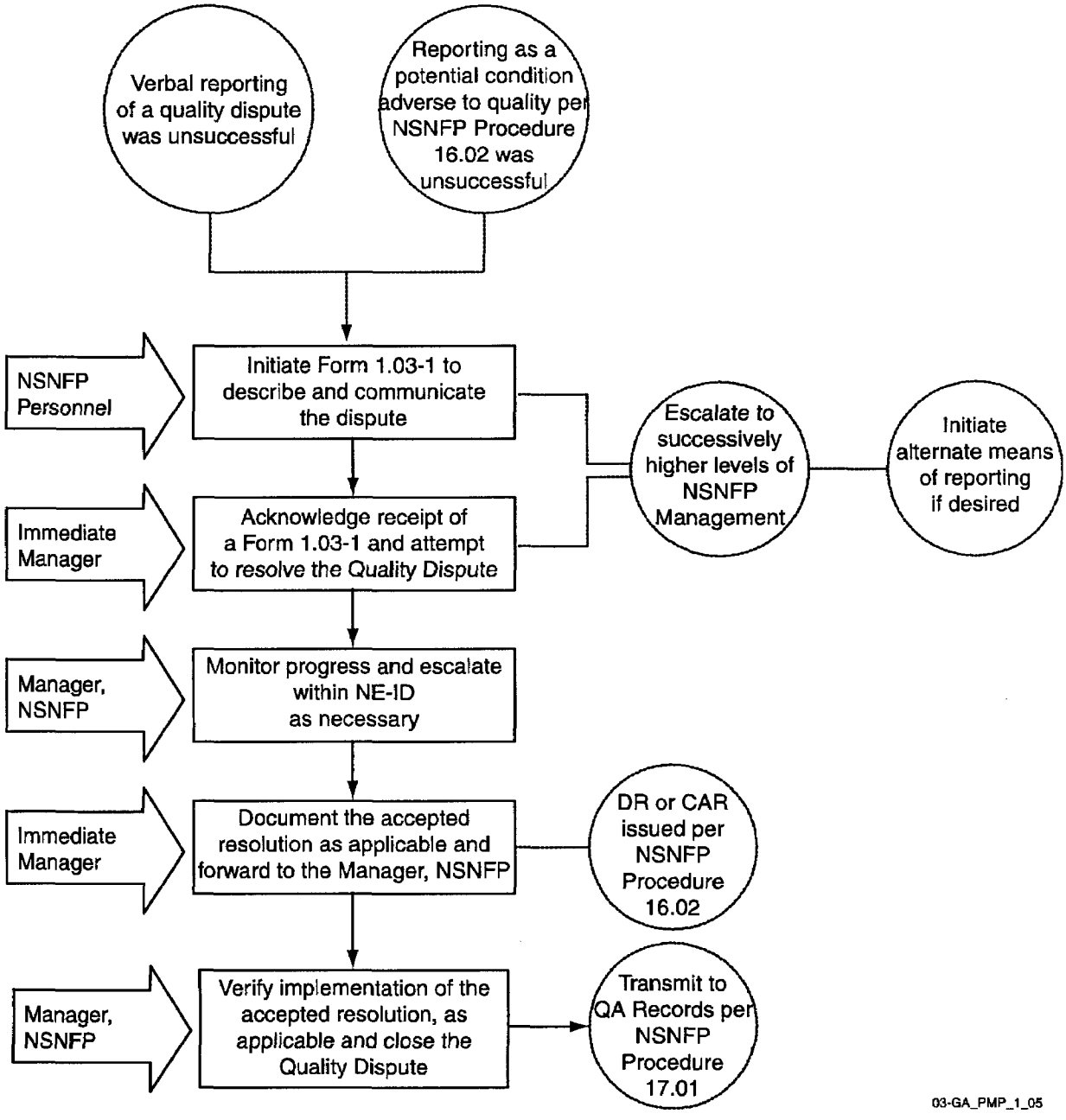
VII. QUALITY RECORDS

The following quality records generated as a result of this procedure require retention in accordance with the identified lifetime or nonpermanent classification and in accordance with applicable records management procedures.

Lifetime

A. Completed Form 1.03-1, Quality Dispute (with attachments, if used).

Nonpermanent

None.

VIII. PROCEDURE FLOW DIAGRAM