



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs

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NRC PROPOSES TO AMEND EVENT NOTIFICATION REGULATIONS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is proposing to amend its notification and reporting requirements for security and other events involving licensed nuclear facilities and the transportation of certain types of nuclear material.

The proposed revisions would change several reporting requirements for independent spent fuel storage installation (ISFSI) and monitored retrievable storage (MRS) facility licensees to more closely align them with those of nuclear reactor facilities. In addition, the proposed revisions would change the requirements for when written followup reports on safeguards events must be submitted. This change would affect power reactors, ISFSIs and several other categories of facilities that produce, possess, or transport spent fuel or special nuclear material.

The changes would reduce, consolidate and remove some licensee reporting notifications and lengthen the reporting period for other notifications. Some new requirements would also be added to permit NRC to effectively carry out its regulatory responsibilities and respond to public and media inquiries during emergencies. Overall, the proposed changes would help the NRC and its licensees to better focus their efforts on the most safety-significant issues and to communicate timely information on recent and ongoing events.

Among other changes, a new requirement would have licensees submit an immediate followup report for degradation in the level of safety of an ISFSI or MRS or other worsening condition, including a declaration of an emergency, a change from one emergency classification to another, or termination of an emergency class. This proposed revision would enable NRC to determine if an immediate response or corrective action is necessary to protect public health and safety. A requirement would also be added to maintain an open, continuous communication channel with the NRC Operations Center, upon request by the NRC. These requirements would be consistent with those of reactor licensees and would ensure that, during an emergency, the continual communications between the licensee and the NRC are not interrupted by overloaded telephone lines.

The rulemaking also proposes to eliminate the redundant requirement that licensees notify the NRC not later than four hours of a fire or explosion that affects the integrity of spent fuel or high level waste or its container. The report of such an event instead would be provided immediately, when an emergency is declared, under the licensee's approved emergency response plan.

The proposed rulemaking would also add a requirement that licensees notify the NRC not later than four hours after the discovery of any event or situation involving spent nuclear fuel or high level waste related to the protection of public health and safety of onsite personnel, or that of the environment, for which a news release is planned or notification to other governments has been or will be made. This requirement is consistent with current reactor licensee reporting requirements.

The comment period ends on November 5, 75 days after publication of the Federal Register Notice on this subject, dated August 22. Comments on the proposed revisions may be submitted to the Secretary of the Commission, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, Attention: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff. They may also be delivered to the NRC Public Document Room at 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland.

Comments may also be provided by e-mail to NRC's home page interactive rulemaking web site located at http://ruleforum.llnl.gov/cgi-bin/rulemake?source=EN_PRULE. Links to the proposed rule, supporting documents, and public comment form will be posted there. The documents will also be available for inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room and through the NRC's Agency-wide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS). For help in using the interactive web site, contact Ms. Carol Gallagher at 301-415-5905 or by email at cag@nrc.gov. Help in using ADAMS is available by contacting the NRC Public Document Room staff at 301-415-4737 or 1-800-397-4209, or by sending an email message to pdr@nrc.gov.

For further information on this rulemaking, contact Tony DiPalo, Office of Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards, at telephone (301) 415-6191 or by email at ajd@nrc.gov.

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