



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No. 09-185

November 12, 2009

NRC SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON DRAFT SAFETY CULTURE POLICY FOR NUCLEAR FACILITIES AND NUCLEAR MATERIAL USERS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued for public comment a draft policy statement on “safety culture,” including the Commission’s expectation that any NRC-regulated organization will establish and maintain a positive safety culture.

The Commission addressed the safe conduct of nuclear power plant operations in a 1989 policy statement and a safety-conscious work environment in a 1996 policy statement. After years of work in this area, and after the experience of incorporating aspects of safety culture into the Reactor Oversight Process effort, the Commission has approved issuing a draft policy statement that sets forth its expectation that all licensees and certificate holders establish and maintain a safety culture that protects public health and safety and the common defense and security. The draft policy defines safety culture as: “That assembly of characteristics, attitudes and behaviors in organizations and individuals which establishes that as an overriding priority, nuclear safety and security issues receive the attention warranted by their significance.”

A safety culture should include a work environment where personnel feel free to raise safety and security concerns without fearing retaliation, as well as prompt and thorough identification, evaluation and resolution of those concerns. The NRC is strongly committed to promoting a positive safety culture among the organizations it regulates.

The NRC is interested in the public’s comments in several areas, including:

- Does the draft policy’s safety culture definition need further clarification?
- What specific safety culture characteristics relevant to particular types of NRC licensees should the draft policy address?
- What characteristics in the draft policy do not contribute to safety culture?
- How can the NRC better involve stakeholders in addressing safety culture?

Comments on the changes will be accepted until Feb. 4, 2010, following publication of the draft safety culture policy statement in the *Federal Register*, (<http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-26816.pdf>). Comments may be mailed to: Alexander Sapountzis, Office of Enforcement, Mail Stop O4 A15A, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, or e-mailed to: alexander.sapountzis@nrc.gov.

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