



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORT OF SPENT FUEL POOL ACCIDENT RISKS AT NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS UNDERGOING DECOMMISSIONING

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is seeking public comment on a draft final report of spent fuel pool accident risks at nuclear power plants that have permanently shut down and are undergoing decommissioning.

After a nuclear power plant permanently shuts down and fuel is removed from the reactor, the predominant source of potential risk involves accidents associated with irradiated fuel stored in the water-filled spent fuel pool.

Licensees of permanently shut down and defueled plants have requested numerous exemptions to NRC regulations. Many of these exemptions have been reviewed on a plant-specific basis because the current body of regulations is primarily directed towards the safety of operating reactors. To remedy this situation, NRC plans to draft a new, comprehensive rule that will take into account risk insights with regard to spent fuel pools. This approach is intended to increase regulatory efficiency while maintaining public health and safety as well as reducing unnecessary regulatory burden.

After briefing the Commission last March, the NRC staff formed a technical working group to study spent fuel pool risks at nuclear power plants being decommissioned. The purpose of this study is to assist the NRC staff in developing the new, comprehensive rule, as well as reviewing emergency planning, safeguards and insurance exemption requests from decommissioning nuclear power plants before rulemaking is completed. The technical working group completed a preliminary study in June.

Several public meetings and a two-day public workshop were held in conjunction with the development of the draft final report. This report reflects comments received from the public and the nuclear industry, as well as the results of other external technical reviews.

A copy of the "Draft Final Technical Study On Spent Fuel Pool Accident Risk At Decommissioning Nuclear Power Plants," is available for review at the NRC Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20037. Copies of the study also are available by writing to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Distribution Services, Washington, DC 20555-0001, and through the NRC Agency Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS). The report also is

available at: <http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/REACTOR/DECOMMISSIONING/SF/index.html> on the NRC Internet web page.

Comments should be submitted within 45 days of the publication of a notice in an upcoming edition of the *Federal Register*, to the Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington DC 20555-0001. Comments may also be submitted electronically by selecting the "comments" link on the NRC's website address listed above.

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