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NRC MAKES DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC ON ITS WEBSITE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has begun making documents available to the public through an "electronic reading room" on the agency's website, which is accessible by computers in homes, schools, offices, and libraries, using a standard web browser.

The new initiative is a change in the current practice of making records available only in paper or microfiche copies at the NRC's Public Document Room in Washington, D.C.

The system, entitled the "Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS)," can be accessed at <http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/ADAMS/index.html>. The site is "user-friendly," and contains easily understandable instructions for searching, viewing and downloading documents.

Beginning November 1, the agency will place all newly received and created public records in the Electronic Reading Room on the website. The Public Document Room in Washington, D.C. will remain open, however, and will continue to provide access for the public to its pre-ADAMS paper and microfiche documents, as well as on-site computers for access to newer documents. During a transition period scheduled to end on November 30, paper and microfiche copies will also continue to be made available in the Public Document Room. The Public Document Room staff will also provide assistance to those using ADAMS.

Interested persons may obtain paper copies of both new and older documents for a fee from the Public Document Room by mail, electronic mail, fax, toll-free telephone, or by downloading them directly from the ADAMS website. Bibliographic descriptions of older documents will also be searchable on the website.

The ADAMS system will have a number of advantages over the former document retrieval system:

- Post-ADAMS records are now available electronically in full text and image, which was not normally the case before;
- ADAMS provides full-text search capability and will make it easier to identify records that meet users' search criteria;

- Newly received and generated records will now be available to the public within days instead of weeks;
- Through the internet, many more members of the public will have ready access to NRC documents.

The agency sought public comment on a proposed amendment to its regulations which reflect the change to the ADAMS system and the final rule was published in the Federal Register on September 9.

The Public Document Room is located at 2120 L Street, NW, telephone 800-397-4209.

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