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NRC EXTENDS FITNESS-FOR-DUTY
REQUIREMENTS TO ADDITIONAL LICENSEES

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is extending its fitness-for-duty requirements to licensees who possess, use or transport unirradiated formula quantities of strategic special nuclear material in concealable forms and quantities, as defined in the NRC's regulations.

The changes will provide greater assurance that employees who have a drug or alcohol problem will not guard, transport, make measurements of or otherwise have access to or control over the material.

The revised regulations are intended to discourage and detect the abuse of alcohol or drugs by employees of licensees for this type of material by subjecting the employees to a chemical testing program, including random tests, and to correct any such abuse through an employee assistance program.

A proposed rule on this subject was published in the Federal Register on April 30, 1992. Changes made as a result of the comments received are:

(1) The rule will apply only to licensees who possess or use easily concealed forms and quantities of the material and

(2) Transporters of strategic special nuclear material who are already subject to the Department of Transportation's drug and alcohol programs that have random testing for drugs and alcohol will be exempt from the rule.

The amendments, which are to Parts 26, 70 and 73 of the Commission's regulations, will be effective on November 30, 1993 (180 days after publication of a Federal Register notice on this subject on June 3, 1993).

Fitness-for-duty requirements already apply to licensees who are building or operating nuclear power plants.

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