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NRC PROPOSES CHANGES TO REGULATIONS
ON STORAGE OF SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is considering amending its regulations for safeguarding stored spent nuclear reactor fuel. The revisions would be aimed at clarifying the requirements and reducing regulatory uncertainty, while continuing to ensure the adequate protection of the public health and safety.

The amendments would not apply to spent fuel pool storage at operating nuclear power plants, which is covered by their overall safeguards plan, but would apply to spent fuel storage at:

- Nuclear power plants that have permanently ceased operations;
- Independent spent fuel storage installations that are located either at or away from reactor sites and are designed, constructed and licensed specifically for the storage of spent fuel;
- Monitored retrievable storage facilities that could be developed in the future by the Department of Energy; and
- Facilities where interim waste storage activities may be conducted by DOE at a future geologic repository.

Currently the Commission's regulations do not contain specific requirements in this area. Affected facilities are licensed using selected portions of the Commission's regulations for safeguarding nuclear reactors and certain other licensed facilities, as well as interim licensing criteria. The proposed regulations would codify safeguards requirements currently imposed on spent fuel storage licensees, and provide a consistent set of requirements for future licensing.

The proposed rules would require licensees to:

- Store this type of material only within a protected area, that is, an area with controlled access and

- physical barriers, such as chain-link fences with
barbed wire topping or concrete walls;
- Ensure that only authorized individuals are granted access to the protected area;
 - Detect unauthorized entry into the protected area and evaluate the cause of the alarm;
 - Provide the capability for prompt communication with a designated response force whenever necessary;
 - Establish a security organization having clearly spelled out operational procedures.

Other requirements are described in a Federal Register notice published on August 14.

Interested persons are invited to submit written comments by November 13 (90 days after publication of the Federal Register notice). The comments should be addressed to the Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555, Attention: Docketing and Service Branch.

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