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NRC PROPOSES EVENT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS
FOR SPENT FUEL STORAGE FACILITIES

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is proposing to add event reporting requirements governing NRC-licensed spent fuel storage facilities, both independent spent fuel storage installations and monitored retrievable storage installations.

The revisions are necessary to ensure that significant events at these licensed facilities are promptly reported to the NRC so that the staff can evaluate whether the licensee has taken appropriate actions to protect the public health and safety and whether prompt NRC action is necessary to address generic safety concerns.

As proposed, the new requirements would cover inability to control spent fuel or high-level radioactive waste, significant reduction in the effectiveness of spent fuel storage confinement systems, personal injuries, fires and explosions, unplanned contamination events and failure of safety equipment.

The following types of events would have to be reported immediately, that is as soon as possible but not later than four hours after the discovery of any event or condition involving spent fuel or high-level radioactive waste:

-- any event that prevents immediate actions necessary to avoid exposures to radiation or radioactive materials that could exceed regulatory limits, or releases of radioactive materials that could exceed regulatory limits (events may include fires, explosions, toxic gas releases, etc.);

-- a defect in any spent fuel storage structure, system or component which is important to safety;

-- a significant reduction in the effectiveness of any spent fuel storage confinement system during use;

-- an action taken that departs from a license condition or a technical specification contained in a license when the action is immediately needed to protect the public health and safety and no action consistent with license conditions and technical specifications that can provide adequate or equivalent protection is immediately apparent;

-- an event that requires unplanned medical treatment at a medical facility of an individual with radioactive contamination on the individual's clothing or body which could cause further radioactive contamination; and

-- an unplanned fire or explosion damaging any spent fuel or high-level radioactive waste or any device or container or equipment containing spent fuel or high-level radioactive waste when the damage affects the integrity of the material or its container.

The types of events which would require reporting within 24 hours of discovery include:

-- any unplanned contamination event that requires access to the contaminated area by workers or the public to be restricted for more than 24 hours by imposing additional radiological controls or by prohibiting entry into the area; and

-- an event in which safety equipment is disabled or fails to function as designed when: (1) the equipment is required by regulation or license condition to prevent releases exceeding regulatory limits, to prevent exposures to radiation and radioactive materials exceeding regulatory limits or to mitigate the consequences of an accident; (2) the equipment is required to be available and operable when it is disabled or fails to function; and (3) no redundant equipment is available and operable to perform the required safety function.

As proposed, immediate and 24-hour event reports would have to be made by telephone to the NRC's Operations Center to be followed by a written report within 30 days.

Written comments on the proposed amendments to Part 72 of the Commission's regulations should be received by November 29, 1993. They should be addressed to the Secretary of the Commission, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555, Attention: Docketing and Service Branch.

Enclosure 6

Public Announcement