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NRC CONSIDERS REVISING REGULATIONS ON  
RELEASE OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS FROM NUCLEAR FACILITIES

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is considering amending its regulations that govern release of radioactive materials from NRC-licensed facilities other than nuclear power plants.

These changes are expected to provide a basis for the Environmental Protection Agency to rescind its regulations for NRC non-reactor licensees and thus eliminate dual regulation.

The revisions would require affected NRC licensees to constrain air emissions of radioactive materials from their facilities so that the highest likely radiation dose they could cause to an individual member of the public would be 10 millirems per year.

NRC currently requires licensees to ensure that the dose to an individual member of the public does not exceed 100 millirems per year from all pathways (including air emissions). The Commission believes these current regulations provide adequate protection of the public health and safety. But the proposed revisions would ensure that air emissions are maintained at a very low level for little or no extra cost (and, considering the elimination of dual regulation, probably at a net savings).

Exceeding the 10-millirem constraint level would not be a violation of the regulations, but failing to report a dose in excess of the constraint level or failing to take appropriate steps to ensure against recurrence would be. However, exceeding NRC's 100-millirem limit does constitute a violation of NRC regulations--under both current and proposed rules.

Interested persons are invited to submit written comments on the proposed revisions by March 12 (90 days after publication of a notice on this subject in the December 13 edition of the Federal Register). The comments should be addressed to the Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, Attention: Docketing and Service Branch. Comments may also be hand delivered or submitted electronically, as explained in the Federal Register notice.

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