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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NRC PROPOSES AMENDMENTS TO FITNESS-FOR-DUTY RULE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is proposing to amend its fitness-for-duty rule which requires licensees to randomly test their employees for substance abuse.

The present requirement calls for random testing at an annual rate of 100 percent of a licensee's work force. As proposed, licensees would be permitted to reduce the annual rate to 50 percent for licensee employees but maintain a 100 percent annual rate for contractor and vendor employees. In addition, the Commission is inviting specific comments as to whether positions critical to the safe operation of a nuclear power plant should be excluded from the proposed reduction in the random testing rate.

The proposed action is based on the Commission's review of the experiences gained from its fitness-for-duty rule since it first became effective in 1989 including the fact that the rate of substance abuse detected as a result of the NRC-mandated program has been low--about 0.25 percent for power reactor licensee employees over the two years.

Written comments on the proposed amendment to Part 26 of the Commission's regulations should be received by June 22, 1993. They should be addressed to the Secretary of the Commission, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555, Attention: Docketing and Service Branch.

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