

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
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No. 97-069

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(May 7, 1997)

NRC SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON PROPOSED REGULATORY GUIDANCE
FOR POWER REACTOR LICENSEES MAKING CHANGES TO FACILITIES OR
PROCEDURES

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is seeking public comment on proposed regulatory guidance for a section of its rules that defines the conditions under which reactor licensees may make changes in their facilities or procedures without prior NRC approval.

Current NRC regulations (Part 50.59 of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations) permit a licensee to make changes in a facility or in procedures and to conduct tests and experiments without prior NRC approval if they do not present an unreviewed safety question. But in 1995, this regulatory framework came into question after it became known that refueling practices at the Millstone 1 plant in Connecticut violated commitments made in the plant safety analysis report when the facility was licensed. After a review of the regulatory process, the NRC staff found that, although the rule provides needed flexibility for licensees, some problems have arisen when NRC staff and industry have interpreted the rule differently.

As a result, the NRC staff is considering issuing additional regulatory guidance. Before proceeding further, the NRC is seeking comments and suggestions from industry and members of the public. Comments should be mailed to: Chief, Rules Review and Directives Branch, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555. Written comments may also be hand-delivered to 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, between 7:45 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. on Federal workdays.

Comments may also be submitted electronically through the NRC Electronic Bulletin Board on FedWorld. The request for public comment has been published in the May 6 edition of the Federal Register and has been posted on the NRC Homepage at <http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/NUREGS/SR1606/index.html>. Any proposed rule developed as a result of comments received and deliberations by NRC staff will be published in the Federal Register for public comment before adoption in final form.

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