

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
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NRC REQUESTS COMMENTS ON DRAFT DOCUMENT ASSESSING
USE OF POTASSIUM IODIDE DURING A SEVERE REACTOR ACCIDENT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is seeking public comment on a draft NRC report which eventually will be used to produce an information brochure about the possible emergency use of potassium iodide by residents in the vicinity of a nuclear power plant.

The report is entitled "Assessment of the Use of Potassium Iodide as a Public Protective Action During a Severe Reactor Accident" (NUREG-1633). Potassium iodide is a substance that can be used, if taken in time after a severe reactor accident, to block the thyroid gland's absorption of radioactive iodine and reduce the risk of thyroid cancer and other diseases.

This document examines the effectiveness of using potassium iodide for that purpose in several different accident scenarios. It also reviews the experience of other countries in using the drug, including its distribution in Belarus and Poland in the aftermath of the 1986 Chernobyl accident.

Comments on the report are due by September 15. They should be submitted to Aby Mohseni, Division of Incident Response, Office for Analysis and Evaluation of Operational Data, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, e-mail asm@nrc.gov, telephone 301-415-6409. The report will be published in final form after comments have been evaluated. Some time thereafter, the NRC will develop a brochure based on the report to assist State and local emergency planners in reaching an informed decision on whether to use potassium iodide in the event of a nuclear accident.

The Commission directed publication of the draft report and development of the brochure when it recently decided to amend its emergency planning regulations to include the use of potassium iodide as a supplement to evacuation and sheltering of the public during severe nuclear power plant emergencies.

Copies of draft NUREG-1633 may be obtained by writing to the Reproduction and Distribution Section, Office of the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Mail Stop OP-137, Washington, DC 20555-0001. The document is also available electronically on NRC's home page on the internet, at <http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/NUREGS/indexnum.html>.

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