

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
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MEETINGS SET FOR MARCH 1-5 IN TEMPE, ARIZONA, TO DEVELOP GUIDANCE CONCERNING USE OF POTASSIUM IODIDE

Representatives from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and other Federal, state, and local agencies, will meet March 1-5 in Tempe, Arizona, to continue efforts to develop guidance concerning the possible emergency use of potassium iodide by residents in the vicinity of a nuclear power plant. The meeting will be open to the public.

The potassium iodide core group, as it is called, also consists of representatives from the Food and Drug Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Emergency Management Agency, the Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors, the states of Arizona, Tennessee, Alabama, and Connecticut, and the town of Waterford, Connecticut.

One of two guidance documents to be developed is an information brochure. The other is a draft report entitled, "Assessment of the Use of Potassium Iodide as a Public Protective Action During a Severe Reactor Accident" (NUREG-1633). Both documents are meant to assist State and local emergency planners in reaching informed decisions on whether to plan for the use of potassium iodide in the event of a nuclear accident. The documents will be published by the NRC.

Potassium iodide is a substance that can be used, if taken shortly 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.

The Federal government is revising its policy on potassium iodide. The core group intends to publish its draft guidance for comment in May and release final documents in October to coincide with the publication of the revised federal policy by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Next month's meeting will be the second of three the core group is holding at various locations throughout the country. The first was held in December in Rockville, Maryland. The third will be scheduled later. The sessions in Tempe will be held at the Amerisuites, located at 1520 West Baseline Road in Tempe. Meeting times are as follows:

March 1 -- 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

March 2, 3 and 4 -- 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

March 5 -- 8:30 a.m. - noon.

The Commission directed publication of the draft report and development of the brochure when it decided last year 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.

Questions regarding the meeting should be directed to Aby Mohseni, e-mail asm@nrc.gov, telephone 301-415-6409.

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