

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

10 CFR Part 72

RIN [3150-AG36]

List of Approved Spent Fuel Storage Casks: VSC-24 Revision

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Direct final rule.

SUMMARY: The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is amending its regulations revising the Pacific Sierra Nuclear Associates (PSNA) VSC-24 cask system listing within the 10 CFR Part 72 “List of approved spent fuel storage casks,” to include Amendment No. 2 to the Certificate of Compliance (CoC). Amendment No. 2 will revise the Technical Specifications and CoC regarding welding and nondestructive examination of welds, the method for determining cask drain time during loading, the minimum temperature for moving the loaded multi-assembly sealed basket (MSB), artificial thermal loads other than spent fuel that may be used to obtain temperature data, and the maximum permissible air outlet temperature. In addition, the amendment includes changes to the Technical Specifications and CoC to correct typographical errors and to make other minor clarifications and changes. This amendment will allow the holders of power reactor operating licenses to store spent fuel in the VSC-24 cask system, as amended, under a general license.

DATES: The final rule is effective (75 days after publication in the Federal Register), unless significant adverse comments are received by (30 days after publication in the Federal Register). If adverse comments are received, a timely withdrawal will be published in the **Federal Register** informing the public that the rule will not take effect.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments to: Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001. Attention: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff.

Deliver comments to 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, between 7:30 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. on Federal workdays.

You may also provide comments via the NRC's interactive rulemaking website (<http://ruleforumlnl.gov>). This site provides the capability to upload comments as files (any format), if your web browser supports that function. For information about the interactive rulemaking website, contact Ms. Carol Gallagher, (301) 415-5905 (e-mail: cag@nrc.gov).

Copies of any comments received may be examined at the NRC Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, NW (Lower Level), Washington, DC.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Gordon Gundersen, telephone (301) 415-6195, e-mail, GEG1@nrc.gov of the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Section 218(a) of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, as amended (NWPA), requires that “[t]he Secretary [of the Department of Energy] shall establish a demonstration program, in cooperation with the private sector, for the dry storage of spent nuclear fuel at civilian nuclear power reactor sites, with the objective of establishing one or more technologies the [Nuclear Regulatory] Commission may, by rule, approve for use at the sites of civilian nuclear power reactors without, to the maximum extent practicable, the need for additional site-specific approvals by the Commission.” Section 133 of the NWPA states, in part, that “[t]he Commission shall, by rule, establish procedures for the licensing of any technology approved by the Commission under Section 218(a) for use at the site of any civilian nuclear power reactor.”

To implement this mandate, the NRC approved dry storage of spent nuclear fuel in NRC-approved casks under a general license, publishing a final rule, in 10 CFR Part 72 entitled “General License for Storage of Spent Fuel at Power Reactor Sites” (55 FR 29181, July 18, 1990). This rule also established a new Subpart L within 10 CFR Part 72 entitled “Approval of Spent Fuel Storage Casks,” containing procedures and criteria for obtaining NRC approval of dry storage cask designs.

The NRC subsequently issued a final rule on April 7, 1993 (58 FR 17948), that approved the VSC-24 cask design, added it to the list of NRC-approved cask designs in § 72.214, and issued Certificate of Compliance Number (CoC No.) 1007.

Discussion

On November 20, 1998, PSNA (the certificate holder), submitted an application to the NRC to amend CoC No. 1007 to revise the Technical Specifications and CoC regarding welding and nondestructive examination of welds, the method for determining cask drain time during loading, the minimum temperature for moving the loaded multi-assembly sealed basket (MSB), artificial thermal loads other than spent fuel that may be used to obtain temperature data, and the maximum permissible air outlet temperature. In addition, the amendment includes changes to the Technical Specifications and CoC to correct typographical errors and to make other minor clarifications and changes. These changes are described in the Revision History for Amendment 2 (CoC, Attachment A, pages iii and iv). The staff performed a safety evaluation of the amendment request and found that the changes provide reasonable assurance that the spent fuel can be stored safely and in compliance with 10 CFR Part 72. The staff documented its review and evaluation in a Safety Evaluation Report. A separate amendment request (submitted December 30, 1998) to permit a Part 72 licensee to store burnable poison rod assemblies (BPRAs) in the VSC-24 cask design along with the spent fuel is being addressed in a separate rulemaking.

This direct final rule will revise the PSNA VSC-24 cask system listing within the list of NRC-approved casks for spent fuel storage in § 72.214 by adding Amendment No. 2 to CoC No. 1007. The amended VSC-24 cask system, when used in accordance with the conditions specified in the CoC and NRC regulations, will meet the requirements of 10 CFR Part 72; thus, adequate protection of public health and safety will continue to be ensured. Amendment No. 2 applies to any VSC-24 cask loaded after [**insert effective date of the final rule**].

Amendment No. 2 to CoC No. 1007 and the underlying SER, and the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact are available for inspection and comment at the NRC Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, NW. (Lower Level), Washington, DC. Single copies of the CoC and SER may be obtained from Gordon Gundersen, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555, telephone (301) 415-6195, email GEG1@nrc.gov.

Discussion of Amendments by Section

§ 72.214 List of approved spent fuel storage casks.

Certificate No. 1007 will be revised indicating the addition of Amendment No. 2 and its effective date.

Procedural Background

This rule is limited to the changes contained in Amendment No. 2 to CoC 1007 and does not include other aspects of the VSC-24 cask system design. Because NRC considers this amendment to its rules to be noncontroversial and routine, the NRC is using the direct final rule procedure for this rule. The amendment to the rules will become effective on (75 days after publication in the Federal Register). However, if the NRC receives significant adverse comments on the associated proposed rule notice published concurrently in the proposed rules section of this Federal Register by (30 days after publication in the Federal Register), then the NRC will publish a document that withdraws this action and will address the comments received

in response to the amendments. These comments will be addressed in a subsequent final rule. Absent significant modification to the proposed revisions requiring republication, the NRC will not initiate a second comment period on this action.

Agreement State Compatibility

Under the “Policy Statement on Adequacy and Compatibility of Agreement State Programs” approved by the Commission on June 30, 1997, and published in the Federal Register on September 3, 1997 (62 FR 46517), this rule is classified as compatibility Category “NRC.” Compatibility is not required for Category “NRC” regulations. The NRC program elements in this category are those that relate directly to areas of regulation reserved to the NRC by the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (AEA) or the provisions of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Although an Agreement State may not adopt program elements reserved to NRC, it may wish to inform its licensees of certain requirements via a mechanism that is consistent with the particular State’s administrative procedure laws, but does not confer regulatory authority on the State.

Plain Language

The Presidential Memorandum dated June 1, 1998, entitled “Plain Language in Government Writing,” directed that the Government’s writing be in plain language. The NRC requests comments on this direct final rule specifically with respect to the clarity and effectiveness of the language used. Comments should be sent to the address listed under the heading “ADDRESSES” above.

Voluntary Consensus Standards

The National Technology Transfer Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-113), requires that Federal agencies use technical standards that are developed or adopted by voluntary consensus standards bodies unless the use of such a standard is inconsistent with applicable law or otherwise impractical. In this direct final rule, the NRC will revise the PSNA VSC-24 cask system listing within the list of NRC approved casks for spent fuel storage in 10 CFR 72.214. This action does not constitute the establishment of a standard that establishes generally-applicable requirements.

Finding of No Significant Environmental Impact: Availability

Under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, and the NRC regulations in Subpart A of 10 CFR Part 51, the NRC has determined that this rule, if adopted, would not be a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment and, therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required. The rule will add Amendment No. 2 to the VSC-24 cask system to the list of approved spent fuel storage casks that power reactor licensees can use to store spent fuel at reactor sites without additional site-specific approvals by the NRC. The amendment will revise the Technical Specifications and CoC regarding welding and nondestructive examination of welds, the method for determining cask drain time during loading, the minimum temperature for moving the loaded MSB, artificial thermal loads other than spent fuel that may be used to obtain temperature data, and the maximum permissible air outlet temperature. In addition, the amendment includes changes to correct typographical errors and other minor clarifications and changes. The environmental

assessment and finding of no significant impact on which this determination is based are available for inspection at the NRC Public Document Room, 2120 L Street NW. (Lower Level), Washington, DC. Single copies of the environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact are available from Gordon Gundersen, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555, Telephone (301) 415- 6195, email GEG1@nrc.gov.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

This direct final rule does not contain a new or amended information collection requirement subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.). Existing requirements were approved by the Office of Management and Budget, Approval Number 3150-0132.

Public Protection Notification

If a means used to impose an information collection does not display a currently valid OMB control number, the NRC may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, the information collection.

Regulatory Analysis

On July 18, 1990 (55 FR 29181), the NRC issued an amendment to 10 CFR Part 72 to provide for the storage of spent nuclear fuel under a general license in cask system designs

approved by the NRC. Any nuclear power reactor licensee can use NRC-certified casks to store spent nuclear fuel if it notifies the NRC in advance, spent fuel is stored under the conditions specified in the cask's CoC, and the conditions of the general license are met.

A list of NRC-approved cask system designs is contained in § 72.214. On April 7, 1993 (58 FR 17948), the NRC issued an amendment to Part 72 that approved the VSC-24 cask design, added it to the list of NRC-approved cask designs in § 72.214, and issued CoC No. 1007. On November 20, 1998, the certificate holder submitted an application to the NRC to amend CoC No. 1007 to revise the Technical Specifications and CoC regarding welding and nondestructive examination of welds, the method for determining cask drain time during loading, the minimum temperature for moving the loaded MSB, artificial thermal loads other than spent fuel that may be used to obtain temperature data, and the maximum permissible air outlet temperature. In addition, the amendment includes changes to the Technical Specifications and CoC to correct typographical errors and to make other minor clarifications and changes.

This rule will permit manufacture of casks under the revisions in Amendment 2. The alternative to this action is to withhold approval of this amended cask system design and give a site-specific license to each utility that proposes to use the casks. This alternative would cost both the NRC and the utilities more time and money in that each utility would have to pursue a new site-specific license. Conducting site-specific reviews would be in conflict with NWPA direction to the NRC to approve technologies for the use of spent fuel storage at the sites of civilian nuclear power reactors without, to the maximum extent practicable, the need for additional site-specific approvals by the NRC. This alternative does not foster competition because it would tend to favor new vendors without cause and would arbitrarily limit the choice of cask system designs available to power reactor licensees.

Approval of the direct final rule would eliminate the above problems and is consistent with previous NRC actions. Further, the direct final rule will have no adverse effect on public health and safety. This direct final rule has no significant identifiable impact or benefit on other Government agencies. Based on the above discussion of the benefits and impacts of the alternatives, the NRC concludes that the requirements of the direct final rule are commensurate with the NRC's responsibilities for public health and safety and the common defense and security. No other available alternative is believed to be as satisfactory, and thus, this action is recommended.

Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act

In accordance with the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996, the NRC has determined that this action is not a major rule and has verified this determination with the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget.

Regulatory Flexibility Certification

In accordance with the Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980 (5 U.S.C. 605(b)), the NRC certifies that this rule will not, if promulgated, have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. This direct final rule affects only the licensing and operation of nuclear power plants, independent spent fuel storage facilities, and PSNA. The companies that own these plants do not fall within the scope of the definition of "small entities" set forth in the Regulatory Flexibility Act or the Small Business Size Standards set out in regulations issued by the Small Business Administration at 13 CFR Part 121.

Backfit Analysis

The NRC has determined that the backfit rule (10 CFR 50.109 or 10 CFR 72.62) does not apply to this direct final rule because this amendment does not involve any provisions that would impose backfits as defined. Therefore, a backfit analysis is not required.

List of Subjects In 10 CFR Part 72

Criminal penalties, Manpower training programs, Nuclear materials, Occupational safety and health, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Security measures, Spent fuel.

For the reasons set out in the preamble and under the authority of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended; the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974, as amended; and 5 U.S.C. 553; the NRC is adopting the following amendments to 10 CFR Part 72.

PART 72--LICENSING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE INDEPENDENT STORAGE OF SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL AND HIGH-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE

1. The authority citation for Part 72 continues to read as follows:

AUTHORITY: Secs. 51, 53, 57, 62, 63, 65, 69, 81, 161, 182, 183, 184, 186, 187, 189, 68 Stat. 929, 930, 932, 933, 934, 935, 948, 953, 954, 955, as amended, sec. 234, 83 Stat. 444, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2071, 2073, 2077, 2092, 2093, 2095, 2099, 2111, 2201, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2282); sec. 274, Pub. L. 86-373, 73 Stat. 688, as amended (42 U.S.C.

2021); sec. 201, as amended, 202, 206, 88 Stat. 1242, as amended, 1244, 1246 (42 U.S.C. 5841, 5842, 5846); Pub. L. 95-601, sec. 10, 92 Stat. 2951 as amended by Pub. L. 10d - 48b, sec. 7902, 10b Stat. 31b3 (42 U.S.C. 5851); sec. 102, Pub. L. 91-190, 83 Stat. 853 (42 U.S.C. 4332); secs. 131, 132, 133, 135, 137, 141, Pub. L. 97-425, 96 Stat. 2229, 2230, 2232, 2241, sec. 148, Pub. L. 100-203, 101 Stat. 1330-235 (42 U.S.C. 10151, 10152, 10153, 10155, 10157, 10161, 10168).

Section 72.44(g) also issued under secs. 142(b) and 148(c), (d), Pub. L. 100-203, 101 Stat. 1330-232, 1330-236 (42 U.S.C. 10162(b), 10168(c),(d)). Section 72.46 also issued under sec. 189, 68 Stat. 955 (42 U.S.C. 2239); sec. 134, Pub. L. 97-425, 96 Stat. 2230 (42 U.S.C. 10154). Section 72.96(d) also issued under sec. 145(g), Pub. L. 100-203, 101 Stat. 1330-235 (42 U.S.C. 10165(g)). Subpart J also issued under secs. 2(2), 2(15), 2(19), 117(a), 141(h), Pub. L. 97-425, 96 Stat. 2202, 2203, 2204, 2222, 2244, (42 U.S.C. 10101, 10137(a), 10161(h)). Subparts K and L are also issued under sec. 133, 98 Stat. 2230 (42 U.S.C. 10153) and sec. 218(a), 96 Stat. 2252 (42 U.S.C. 10198).

2. Section 72.214, Certificate of Compliance (CoC) 1007 is revised to read as follows:

§ 72.214 List of approved spent fuel storage casks.

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Certificate Number: 1007.

Initial Certificate Effective Date: May 7, 1993.

Amendment Number 1 Effective Date: May 30, 2000.

Amendment Number 2 Effective Date: (75 days after publication in Federal Register).

SAR Submitted by: Pacific Sierra Nuclear Associates.

SAR Title: Final Safety Analysis Report for the Ventilated Storage Cask System.

Docket Number: 72-1007.

Certificate Expiration Date: May 7, 2013.

Model Number: VSC-24.

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Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 25th day of May, 2000.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

/RA/

William D. Travers,
Executive Director for Operations.

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