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No. 96-28

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
(Tuesday, February 6, 1996)

NRC PROPOSES RULE REQUIRING REPORTING  
OF UNAUTHORIZED USE OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is proposing to amend its regulations to add a new requirement that licensees notify the NRC operations center no later than 24 hours after learning of any intentional--or suspected intentional--diversion of radioactive material from its intended or authorized use.

The regulation would require reporting of such events that cause, or have the potential to cause, exposure of individuals, whether or not the exposure exceeds NRC regulatory limits. It also would require licensees to notify NRC when they are unable, within 48 hours after discovery of such an event, to rule out that the use was intentional.

NRC is proposing this action as the result of two recent incidents -- one at the National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland, and the other at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts -- involving internal contamination of individuals with phosphorus-32. Both are under investigation.

NRC is seeking public comments on the new rule, which was published in the January 31 edition of the Federal Register. Comments should be submitted by March 1, although those received after that date will be considered if it is practical to do so.

Comments should be mailed to: Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, Attention: Docketing and Service Branch. They may be hand-delivered to NRC at 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, between 7:45 a. m. and 4:15 p. m. on Federal workdays.

Documents related to this rulemaking may be examined at the NRC Public Document Room, 2120 L Street NW (Lower Level), Washington, DC. They also may be accessed electronically on the NRC FedWorld Electronic Bulletin Board, which may be used as well for submitting comments.

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