



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC SCHEDULES WORKSHOP ON FUEL FACILITY OVERSIGHT PROGRAM

The NRC has scheduled a workshop on September 13 in Rockville, Maryland, to obtain further suggestions from the public on improving the agency's oversight program for nuclear fuel cycle facilities.

This workshop is one of several to be held to factor public and other stakeholder comments into a revised fuel facility oversight program.

This meeting will focus on:

- Status of the evolving revision of the oversight program;
- Safety and safeguards problem identification, resolution, and correction;
- Revision of the NRC inspection program;
- Revision of the NRC overall performance assessment process;
- Communication plans for informing stakeholders about the oversight program revision;
- Next actions/schedule to complete revision of the oversight program.

The goals of the oversight program are to focus oversight on activities where potential risks are greatest, obtain more objective indicators of risk-related performance, increase public confidence in the NRC's oversight program, and increase regulatory effectiveness, efficiency, and realism. This initiative will employ lessons learned from the recently revised commercial nuclear reactor oversight program.

The nuclear fuel cycle begins with the milling of uranium ore to produce uranium concentrate called "yellowcake." The yellowcake is converted into uranium hexafluoride gas at a special facility and loaded into cylinders. The cylinders are sent to a gaseous diffusion plant, where uranium is enriched for use as reactor fuel. The enriched uranium is then converted into oxide powder, fabricated into fuel pellets, loaded into fuel rods, and bundled into reactor fuel assemblies at a fuel fabrication facility. Assemblies are then transported to nuclear power plants, non-power research reactor facilities, and naval propulsion reactors for use as fuel.

The NRC currently inspects these fuel facilities several times a year in a variety of technical areas, such as chemical process safety, fire protection, nuclear criticality safety, radiation safety, and nuclear material safeguards. Results of these NRC inspections are available to the public.

The workshop, which is open to the public, will be held from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. in Room 3B43 of the agency's headquarters at Two White Flint North, 11545 Rockville Pike. Visitor parking is limited; however, the building can be readily reached via the Red Line Metro to the White Flint station.

Those who seek background information on this initiative may obtain transcripts and presentations for past meetings at www.nrc.gov/NMSS/FCSS/FCOB/INSP/REVISED/fcindex.htm on the NRC's web site.

Interested persons can also access a related NRC paper, SECY 99-188, "Evaluation and Proposed Revision of the Nuclear Fuel Cycle Safety Inspection Program," from the agency's web site, or from the Public Document Room, telephone 202-634-3273.

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