



Federal Emergency Management Agency

Washington, D.C. 20472

MAIL 20 2001

PT-CR

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting FEMA Regional Directors
(Regions I-X)

FROM: *Ronald S. Salter*
Director
Chemical and Radiological Preparedness Division

SUBJECT: Status of Activities Related to NRC Potassium Iodide (KI)
Rulemaking

The purpose of this memorandum is to advise you that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has revised a section of its emergency preparedness regulations to require that States consider including potassium iodide (KI) as a protective measure for the general public to supplement sheltering and evacuation in the event of a severe nuclear power plant accident.¹ The NRC published the rule change in the *Federal Register* (Volume 66, Number 13, page 5427) on January 19, 2001. The change becomes effective April 19, 2001.

Concomitant with this action, the NRC has agreed to provide funding for a supply of KI for a State, or Tribe, that chooses to incorporate KI for the general public in their emergency plans. In some cases, if designated by the State, local governments may also request the funding. After funding the initial purchases of KI (\$400,000 in FY 2001 and a similar amount requested in FY 2002), the Commission may consider extending the program to fund replenishment supplies, but has made no commitments in this regard.

NRC and FEMA staff have been working on a program to implement this new rule. In conjunction with this action, we are awaiting the issuance of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) final guidance on KI. This issuance will address recommended doses for different risk groups (age groups) and protective action recommendations as to when the population should ingest KI to protect the thyroid from the uptake of radioactive iodine.

The NRC has revised draft NUREG-1633 which provides guidance on the use of KI. The draft NUREG-1633 will be sent to the NRC Commissioners in April 2001. After review by the Commission, the NUREG will be issued for a 60-day comment period.

¹If taken in time, Potassium Iodide blocks the thyroid gland's uptake of radioactive iodine and thus would prevent thyroid cancers and other diseases that might otherwise be caused by exposure to radioactive iodine that could be dispersed in a severe nuclear accident.

States are encouraged to begin their process for considering KI as early as possible, recognizing that the NRC's resources for this purpose will be limited. However, the consideration process by State, Tribal, and in some cases, local government is not expected to have been completed until the final FDA guidance and NUREG-1633 has been issued and the application process established.

Please advise the States and Tribes within your Regional jurisdiction of this new rulemaking and its implementation status. We will keep you informed of further developments. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Vanessa E. Quinn, Chief, Radiological Emergency Preparedness Branch, FEMA at (202) 646-3664. For the NRC, contact Kathy Halvey Gibson, Chief, Emergency Preparedness and Health Physics Section at (301) 415-1086.

cc: Glenn Tracy, NRC
PT&E Division Chiefs