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# NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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## **NRC SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON PROPOSED RULE FOR PACKAGING AND TRANSPORTING RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is requesting public comment on proposed regulations regarding the packaging and transportation of radioactive material.

The agency's current transportation regulations are based, in part, on those developed by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), a worldwide standard-setting organization. The IAEA periodically revises its transportation standards to reflect scientific and technical advances, and the NRC accordingly updates its own regulations to be compatible with those of IAEA. This revision is being coordinated with the Department of Transportation, which is the lead federal agency for transportation regulations in the United States and the U.S. competent authority for interaction with the IAEA.

Issues to be addressed in this rulemaking were published in the *Federal Register* for comment in July, and public meetings were held in Rockville, Maryland; Atlanta, Georgia; and Oakland, California. Representatives from the general public, environmental and public interest groups, various industries, as well as government officials, discussed their comments.

There are 19 issues discussed in the proposed rule, 11 of which are designed for consistency with IAEA standards and the remainder were NRC-initiated.

Four issues in the proposed rule attracted a high level of public interest during discussions at the meetings and through comments on the internet web site. The issues concern (1) radionuclide exemption values, namely, whether to adopt IAEA's uniform dose-based standard versus using the current concentration-based standard; (2) special package approvals, namely, whether NRC should propose a standard for review of large-object packages, such as the Trojan reactor vessel, rather than review each request on a case-by-case basis through exemptions; (3) change authority for Part 71 certificate holders, namely, whether such certificate holders can safely make limited changes to the design of a transportation package, as permitted for reactor and spent fuel storage facility licensees; and (4) single versus double containment requirements for plutonium packages.

One issue recently added to the proposed rule involves event reporting requirements.

The staff is particularly interested in public and industry comments related to costs and benefits resulting from the proposed requirements, as well as operational data on exposures that might result.

The proposed rule will be discussed in detail at a series of upcoming public meetings, the dates and locations of which will be announced separately.

Interested persons may submit comments within 90 days of publication in the Federal Register, expected shortly. The proposed rule is available on the NRC web site, at <http://ruleforum.llnl.gov>  
Comments may be submitted directly on the web site, or by mail to the Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC, 20555-0001, Attn: Rulemaking and Adjudications staff.

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