



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON PROPOSED RULE REGARDING VERY LOW LEVELS OF CERTAIN RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL

The NRC is seeking public comment on proposed amendments to its regulations regarding the transfer of very low levels of “source material” from organizations or persons licensed to handle this material to those not licensed. Source material is uranium and thorium, both radioactive materials, that exist naturally in soil and appear in trace quantities in many chemical mixtures and compounds.

The proposed rule would ensure the protection of public health and safety from transfers of very low concentrations of radioactive material.

Currently, NRC regulations exempt persons from licensing requirements for source material if they possess or use only materials that contain less than 0.05 percent by weight of uranium and thorium.

A report issued in June 2001, “Systematic Radiological Assessment of Exemptions for Source and Byproduct Materials,” NUREG-1717, indicates that, in certain situations, quantities of source material in concentrations below the 0.05 limit could potentially result in exposures to radiation that exceed NRC’s public radiation dose limits.

The proposed rulemaking would ensure that transfers of source material at very low concentration levels from specific licensees to persons exempt from licensing do not cause undue risk to the public. A licensee seeking to transfer such low levels of source material would have to submit information to NRC on the type and quantity of the material, location of the transfer, end use of the transfer, individual public dose estimates, and assumptions used in estimating the dose. The NRC would independently analyze the request before approving the transfer.

Copies of the proposed rule will be available from the agency’s web site, at <http://ruleforum.llnl.gov/>. Interested persons may submit comments electronically within 75 days after publication in the Federal Register, expected shortly. Comments may also be mailed to the Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC, 20555-0001, Attention: Rulemakings and Adjudications staff.

The proposed rule will also be accessible from the Publicly Available Records component of NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS). ADAMS may be accessed from the NRC website at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html> (the Public Electronic Reading Room). Copies of NUREG-1717 will also be available on ADAMS. Help in using ADAMS is available by calling the NRC Public Document Room at 301/415-4737 or 1/800/397-4209, or by sending an e-mail message to pdr@nrc.gov.

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