



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs

Telephone: 301/415-8200

Washington, DC 20555-001

E-mail: opa@nrc.gov

Web Site: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA>

No. 03-114

September 8, 2003

NRC AMENDING RULES ON HOW LICENSEES, APPLICANTS AND MEMBERS OF PUBLIC MAY SUBMIT DOCUMENTS ELECTRONICALLY

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is revising its rules on when and how licensees, applicants, vendors and members of the public may submit documents electronically to the agency. The action will significantly expedite and ease communication with the NRC.

The NRC is modifying numerous provisions in its regulations to make clear it will accept electronic communications, if they comply with agency guidance. Electronic submissions remain voluntary; the NRC will continue to accept submissions via paper documents.

The NRC will publish the revised rule and accompanying guidance in the *Federal Register* shortly. The revised rule and guidance will become effective on January 1, 2004. When the revised rule becomes effective, the new guidance document will supersede the agency's earlier guidance on electronic submissions, which included a Regulatory Issues Summary that informed licensees regulated under Part 50 of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations that they may use the agency's Electronic Information Exchange (EIE) to submit electronically signed documents. The revised rule also will supersede the August 10 letter of last year issued to certain fuel cycle facilities providing them the option of electronic submission.

The revised regulations authorize the voluntary electronic submissions to the agency through such means as CD-ROM, e-mail, telefax, and the agency's EIE. The EIE enables the electronic submission of documents in a secure Web-based environment. The guidance document accompanying the revised rule explains when and how to submit documents to the agency electronically, when and how to use electronic signatures, what methods and formats may not be used, and procedures for the treatment of non-public information.

The revised rule and the accompanying guidance reflect public comments received at both a public meeting conducted by the NRC in October of last year and formal written comments received when the agency published the proposed rule and accompanying guidance in the *Federal Register* on September 6 of last year.

Based on public comments received from 19 persons or organizations, most of which focused on the guidance document, the NRC made significant changes. The NRC has decided to eliminate nearly all requirements for submissions of multiple copies of paper or CD-ROMs. Submitters may file a single copy.

The revised rule and guidance do not address the submission of documents in hearings under NRC regulations in Part 2 and other parts that govern hearings. The agency will seek public comment on a separate rule and guidance governing procedures for electronic filings in adjudicatory proceedings. Until then, adjudicatory documents submitted to the Atomic Safety and Licensing Boards will continue to be filed in paper, unless electronic filing is authorized on a case-by-case basis.

The revised rule and accompanying guidance will be available on the agency's website, at <http://www.nrc.gov/site-help/eie.html>. Contact Brenda Shelton, at BFS1@nrc.gov, for more information on the revised rule. Publicly available documents related to this rulemaking may be examined and copied for a fee at the NRC's Public Document Room, Public File Area O1F21, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland; or by calling 1-800-397-4209 or (301) 415-4737.

###