



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>

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NRC STAFF ISSUES DRAFT LETTER, CONCERNING POTENTIAL REACTOR CONTAINMENT SUMP ISSUE, FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has issued for public comment a draft letter asking operators of pressurized water reactors (PWR) for information related to a component of a safety-related water recirculation system called a containment sump.

Operating experience at boiling water reactors, as well as recent research, has indicated debris from certain pipe-break accidents inside a containment building could potentially block PWR sumps. The letter asks PWR operators to document how their plants' long-term reactor core cooling requirements would be met under accident conditions, given the potential for sump blockage.

Interested members of the public have 60 days from the issuance of a notice in the *Federal Register*, expected shortly, to comment on the draft letter. The NRC staff plans to hold a public meeting in the spring to further explain the rationale for the letter and to gather comments. Meeting details will be published as soon as they are available. The staff expects to issue the final Generic Letter later this summer.

The draft Generic Letter is available electronically through the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) on the NRC web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>, by entering accession number ML040830518. Help in using ADAMS is available from the NRC's Public Document Room at 800/397-4209 or 301/415-4737.

The NRC web site also contains a section dealing with staff activities on the PWR containment sump issue, available at this address: <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/ops-experience/pwr-sump-performance.html>.

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