

Statement on use of IAEA Safety Series

The United States generally does not adopt, in the formal sense of the word, the requirements and guidance contained in the Safety Standards Series of the IAEA. However, the various Federal agencies within the US utilize these requirements and guides in the development of regulations.

In the past year, the US has moved to adopt the necessary regulations and guidance to implement the Code of Conduct for Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. As you know, the United States Government has formally endorsed this code, and encouraged other countries to do the same. Within the U.S., control for radioactive sources is jointly held by Federal Agencies, such as the NRC, and by "Agreement States" operating adequate and compatible regulations. We have taken a number of steps this year, working with our Agreement States, to establish additional controls over radioactive sources to ensure that they are protected.

I am also pleased to report that the NRC published its regulations implementing the import and export provisions of Code of Conduct on July 1, 2005. These regulations are scheduled to become effective on December 28, 2005. In accordance with the Code of Conduct, the regulations require the NRC to consider whether or not a country has or is working toward having an adequate regulatory structure to safely and securely handle certain radioactive sources (i.e., Category 1 and 2 sources) before exports are approved. The NRC is currently working with the Department of State to develop a list of countries that are considered to have an adequate regulatory structure in place and the list is expected to be finalized shortly. The NRC has received approximately 15 license applications thus far. The NRC staff will present our implementation status and lessons learned during an IAEA technical meeting on this subject from 12-14 December, 2005.

We are also moving forward with plans for our National Source Tracking System, which will enable our tracking of Category 1 and 2 sources to a much higher degree than previously. At this time we are implementing an interim database of sources while the development of the computer tracking system continues. The interim database meets Basic Principle 11 of the Code of Conduct to establish a national register of radioactive sources that is appropriately protected. The more automated NSTS will improve accountability and control of radioactive sources. NRC published a proposed rule on July 28, 2005 which will require licensees to report information on transactions involving sources from their origin (manufacture or import) through transfers from one facility to another (shipping and receipt), to disposition (disposal, destruction, decay, export). Licensees will be able to enter data online to facilitate their reporting. NSTS will permit NRC and other agencies to monitor the location and use of nationally tracked sources; conduct inspections; communicate nationally tracked source information to other government agencies; verify legitimate ownership and use of nationally tracked sources; and further analyze hazards attributable to the possession and use of these sources. NRC is preparing to issue a contract for development of the system. It is expected to be operational in the summer of 2007.