UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
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ALL AGREEMENT AND NON-AGREEMENT STATES

ISSUANCE OF NEW ISO STANDARD (FSME-07- 013)

Purpose: To inform you that the International Standards Organization (ISO) intends to release the new Standard #21482, *Ionizing Radiation Warning - Supplementary Symbol*, on February 15, 2007. No action is required at this time.

Background: At the December 2000, *International Conference of National Regulatory Authorities with Competence in the Safety of Radiation Sources and the Security of Radioactive Materials*, participants discussed concerns about the increasing number of radiation events involving the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Category 1 and 2 sources that caused death or serious injury. Conference attendees concluded that the standard radiation symbol (trefoil) had no inherent meaning to individuals (such as children) who had not been trained in radiation safety. As a result, the conference recommended that a universal system of labeling radioactive sources be developed that would target any citizen, anywhere in the world with the message: "This object is dangerous and should be left alone," as well as to convey the thought "Run Away," all without words.

The International Atomic Energy Agency General Conference on September 10, 2001, approved the development by ISO of a new standard specifying the supplementary warning symbol. In 2005, the Gallup Institute tested five candidate symbols on 150 people in each of 11 different countries (including the U.S.) to narrow the choice. In July 2006, the ISO Secretary reported that 14 countries (including the U.S.) approved the standard; 3 countries approved with comments; 2 countries abstained, and 2 countries disapproved. NRC has followed the development of the symbol. NRC has not initiated rulemaking to address this matter.

Discussion: The new symbol is shown in the enclosure. IAEA intends the new symbol to be used for IAEA Category 1, 2, and 3 sealed sources (dangerous sources that can cause death or serious injury). The new symbol is **not** intended to replace the trefoil symbol, rather the new symbol is intended to serve as a supplement, i.e., an addition to the current practice.

Used as intended, the symbol would **not** be placed where the general public could see it. It is not intended to scare the general public. The symbol would not be used on a door to a room or in public areas, or on trucks or shipping containers. The symbol would be placed on the source, container or shielding, or under the device cover such that it is not immediately visible under normal use but becomes visible if dismantling is attempted. The symbol is intended to be located as close as practicable to the source.

If new sources are engraved or labeled by the manufacturer with the supplemental symbol, the symbol would be on the housing or as close to the source as feasible when produced. For existing sources, the use of the supplemental symbol is encouraged by IAEA. IAEA also intends to make scrapyards, smelting operations, or places where radioactive material is not intended to be located aware of the symbol's use.

ISO is scheduled to publish and release the new standard on February 15, 2007. IAEA and ISO both plan media announcements about the publication of the new standard. IAEA will issue a press release, a TV clip on the development of the symbol, and an article in the IAEA bulletin that is mailed to all Member States. The press release and TV clip are scheduled for February 15th and the IAEA bulletin article comes out in March 2007. IAEA has gained agreement from most source manufacturers to start using the symbol on IAEA Category 1, 2, and 3 new sources as soon as possible. IAEA also plans to hold a workshop later this year to work on implementation strategies for how best to retrofit the symbol on existing applicable sources.

If you have any questions on this correspondence, please contact me at (301) 415-3340 or the individual named below.

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Enclosure: *Supplementary Warning Symbol*

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