



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC SEEKS COMMENT ON DRAFT RULE FOR NEW REACTOR AIRCRAFT IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission is seeking public comment on a proposed rule to enhance the safety and security of future nuclear power plants. The proposal would require applicants for new reactors to assess the level of built-in protection a particular design has to avoid or mitigate the effects of a large commercial aircraft impact, reducing the need for human intervention to protect public health and safety.

The proposed rule would apply to the following types of applications:

- A new reactor design certification application not referencing an approved standard design;
- A new reactor design approval application;
- A new combined license application not referencing a design certification, standard design approval or manufactured reactor; or,
- A new manufacturing license application not referencing a design certification or standard design approval.

Nuclear power plants are designed under very stringent requirements to assure they can safely shut down following “design-basis events” such as large fires, floods, earthquakes and hurricanes, as well as improbable equipment malfunctions including pipe breaks. These requirements include having two redundant systems to accomplish each safety function. The proposed rule establishes large commercial aircraft crashes as “beyond-design-basis events.” Under the proposed rule, any design feature, functional capability or strategy adopted solely to comply with the rule would meet high quality standards but would be exempt from NRC design-basis regulations, such as regulations for redundancy.

The NRC has already taken several steps to improve security at existing nuclear power plants, including adopting a rule in January that requires both existing and potential new reactors to defend against a more realistic threat. While the agency does not believe nuclear power plants should be required to defend against large commercial aircraft, the NRC works closely with other federal agencies such as NORAD, the Federal Aviation Administration and the intelligence community to provide layered protection against such a threat. The agency expects these efforts would effectively preclude an aircraft attack from occurring. Should such an unlikely event take place at a new plant designed in accordance with the proposed rule, the NRC expects the plant would be better able to withstand such a crash.

The proposed rule may be viewed and downloaded via the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> . For more information on the proposed rule, please contact Stewart Schneider at 301-415-1642 or via e-mail at sxs4@nrc.gov ; or Nanette Gilles at 301-415-1180 or via e-mail at nvg@nrc.gov . Comments on the proposed rule should be submitted within 75 days of the rule's publication in the *Federal Register*, expected shortly. Comments can be mailed to Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, ATTN: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff. Comments can be e-mailed to SECY@nrc.gov . If you fail to receive a reply e-mail confirming that we have received your comments, please call (301) 415-1966. Comments can also be submitted online at the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> . Comments can be hand-delivered to 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland 20852, between 7:30 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. Federal workdays, or faxed to Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission at (301) 415-1101. Please include **RIN 3150-AI19** in the subject line.

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