

Question 16: Is the NRC moving towards a new dose limit (TEDE) of 2 rem per year?

Answer 16:

The Commission has not made any decisions on whether to adopt a new dose limit. The NRC staff is currently examining the possibility of increasing alignment with international radiation protection recommendations, including the recommendation for a dose limit of 10 rem over 5 years (2 rem per year average) with a maximum of 5 rem in any one year. The NRC staff is continuing to solicit stakeholder feedback on the implications of this recommendation, and cost-benefit information that would be needed for a regulatory analysis and backfit analysis that would be needed to support any staff proposal.

Question 17: Dose limit changes based on ICRP recommendations appear to be on the horizon for the United States. What is the expected implementation time frame? What effect do you believe this will have on regulatory oversight? Is the NRC going to stay with the Planned Special Exposure methodology to allow licensees to go above the 10 rem in 5 year average?

Answer 17:

The Commission has not made any decisions on whether to adopt a new dose limit, or other issues that would increase alignment of the NRC radiation protection regulations with international radiation protection recommendations. The NRC staff is to provide recommendations to the Commission for policy issues in late 2011. With Commission direction on policy issues, the NRC staff would work to complete the necessary technical regulatory basis for a proposed rule, and initiate rulemaking when that regulatory basis is completed. It is unlikely that a proposed rule would be available for public comment before late 2012. The NRC staff will consider appropriate implementation timeframes in any proposal, and notes that the previous revision of 10 CFR Part 20 was given a three year implementation period.

The NRC staff will examine the issues of changes in dose limits regulatory oversight as part of its analysis of policy issues for the Commission. At this time it is not possible to predict if any changes will be necessary.

The NRC staff will examine the need for Planned Special Exposure methodologies as part of the analysis of policy issues for the Commission. The staff recognizes that this provision provides the opportunity for flexibility under certain situations, but also notes that the provision has not actually been needed by licensees as part of their licensed activities. At this time it is not possible to predict if any changes will be necessary.