

Rulemaking Comments

**PRM-50-104
(77FR25375)**

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USNRC

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From: Thomas Meacham [tom.meacham@wku.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, May 16, 2012 4:06 PM
To: Rulemaking Comments
Subject: Current U.S. 10-mile evacuation zones inadequate

May 23, 2012 (11:45 am)

OFFICE OF SECRETARY
RULEMAKINGS AND
ADJUDICATIONS STAFF

The nuclear disasters at Fukushima and Chernobyl provide evidence that the current 10-mile emergency evacuation zones in the U.S. are inadequate to protect the public from the possibility of acute radiation exposures. Moreover, as we have learned in recent months and years, women and children are more susceptible to radiation than men: regulations must protect the most vulnerable in society.

At both Fukushima and Chernobyl, actual evacuations took place far beyond 10 miles. At Fukushima (as at Three Mile Island in 1979) far more people evacuated than those who were told to. About one-third of the Fukushima evacuees were not part of the evacuation zones.

With 104 operating reactors in the U.S., it is essential that emergency evacuation rules reflect the real dangers each of these reactors presents.

The Nuclear Information and Resource Service petition calls for a three-tiered Emergency Planning Zone. The current 10-mile zone would expand to 25 miles, with all current requirements intact. A new zone from 25-50 miles would be established; utilities would be required to notify residents of these zones of evacuation routes if needed, but would not conduct biannual exercises. The Ingestion Pathway Zone, designed for interdiction of contaminated food, milk, and water, would be expanded from the current 50 miles to 100 miles. And a new rule would be established that would require emergency exercises to include scenarios of initiating or concurrent regionally-appropriate natural disasters.

The petition can be read in its entirety at <http://www.nirs.org/reactorwatch/emergency/emergencyhome.htm>. Please give it careful consideration. It is far better to be safe than sorry.

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