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NUCLEAR INDUSTRY SEEKS CHANGES IN NRC
FIRE PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS FOR NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is requesting public comments on a petition from the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) asking the Commission to amend its existing requirements governing fire protection at NRC-licensed nuclear power plants.

NEI is a trade organization responsible for establishing unified policy on matters affecting the nuclear energy industry; its membership includes all utilities licensed to operate commercial nuclear power plants in this country.

According to the NEI petition, the NRC's existing fire protection requirements are overly burdensome and prescriptive and do not reflect 20 years of experience gained by the NRC and the nuclear industry in fire protection for nuclear power plants. The petition includes proposed amendments which NEI says would permit more flexible and cost-effective fire protection requirements at nuclear power plants without adversely affecting the ability of a licensee to safely shutdown a plant in the event of a fire.

In addition to public comments on the petition itself, the NRC also is requesting comments on a number of specific issues related to fire protection at nuclear power plants. These comments will aid the staff in developing its own position on the NEI petition and in the development of its regulatory positions and approaches for a performance-oriented, risk-based fire protection rulemaking.

A copy of the petition, which was published in the Federal Register on June 6, can be obtained by writing to the Rules Review and Directives Branch, Office of Administration, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D. C. 20555.

Comments on the petition and the specific issues raised by the NRC staff should be received by September 29. Written comments should be directed to the Secretary, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D. C. 20555, Attention: Docketing and Service Branch.

Comments also may be submitted electronically, in either ASCII text or WordPerfect format (version 5.1 or later), by calling the NRC Electronic Bulletin Board (BBS) on FedWorld. If using a personal computer and modem, the NRC rulemaking subsystem on FedWorld can be accessed directly by dialing 1-800-303-9672. The NRC subsystem on FedWorld also can be accessed by a direct dial phone number for the main FedWorld BBS, 1-703-321-3339 or by using Telnet via Internet: fedworld.gov. Background documents also are available for downloading and viewing on the bulletin board.

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