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NRC AMENDS DECOMMISSIONING RECORD KEEPING AND LICENSE
TERMINATION REQUIREMENTS FOR NON-REACTOR LICENSEES

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is amending its regulations to require certain non-reactor (materials) licensees to maintain the necessary records to ensure that their licensed facilities and sites are adequately decontaminated prior to termination of the license.

At the present time, licensees who will be affected by these amendments are required to keep certain records important to decommissioning in an identified location until the license is terminated. These records include: drawings of structures and equipment in restricted areas where radioactive materials were used or stored, documentation identifying the location of inaccessible residual radioactive contamination and detailed descriptions of spilled materials that could affect decommissioning.

These concerns were the subject of a General Accounting Office report issued in May 1989 and a Congressional hearing chaired by Representative Mike Synar in August of that year.

The amendments require material licensees, in addition to existing record-keeping requirements, to maintain, in a single document, a list of:

- (1) all areas designated and formerly designated as restricted areas as defined in Part 20 of the NRC's regulations;
- (2) all areas outside of restricted areas that require documentation for spills or unusual occurrences in the current rule pertaining to decommissioning;
- (3) all areas outside of restricted areas where waste has been buried (Part 72 licensees are exempt), and
- (4) all areas outside of restricted areas which contain material (Part 72 licensees are exempt) that, if the license were terminated, would require the licensee to either decontaminate or apply for approval for disposal.

Areas containing only sealed sources (provided that the sources have not leaked or no contamination remains after any leak), byproduct materials having only half-lives of 65 days or less, or depleted uranium used only for shielding or as penetrators in unused munitions are not required to be listed

For those licensees who submit a decommissioning plan, the single document listing would have to accompany that plan together with any other record-keeping information that the licensee identifies as important to support the plan. Moreover, for affected licensees, the location and description of equipment to be left onsite that was contaminated when final decommissioning was initiated would have to be listed (prior to license termination) since such equipment could be a potential source of radiation exposure.

Other licensees, who may not be required to submit a decommissioning plan but from who additional information is needed, will be required to submit the information on a specific basis.

The amendments to Parts 30, 40, 50, 70 and 72 of the Commission's regulations will become effective on October 25.

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