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NRC PROPOSES TO AMEND REQUIREMENTS GOVERNING
TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is proposing to add four criteria to its regulations to determine the content of technical specifications for licensed nuclear power plants.

Technical specifications are a part of the NRC-issued operating license. They set forth the specific characteristics of a nuclear power plant and the conditions for its operation that are required to provide assurance that the public health and safety will be protected. They cannot be changed without the prior approval of a license amendment by the NRC.

The criteria were developed because of an overly-broad use of technical specifications to impose requirements which, in turn, has diverted attention from the more important requirements in these documents and has resulted in an adverse impact on safety.

The four new criteria would define the content of technical specifications as limiting conditions for operation. Limiting conditions for operation, if exceeded, require shutdown of a facility or remedial action until the condition can be met.

As proposed, the four criteria would be the same as those listed in the Commission's Final Policy Statement on Technical Specifications Improvements for Nuclear Power Reactors issued in July of last year. They are:

- 1) instruments used to detect in a reactor control room a significant abnormal degradation of the reactor coolant system pressure boundary;
- 2) a variable, design feature or operating restriction that is an initial condition of an accident, or an analysis that assumes the failure of or presents a challenge to a barrier designed to prevent the release of radioactivity;
- 3) a structure, system or component which functions to mitigate an accident, or a situation that assumes the failure of

or presents a challenge to the integrity of a barrier to prevent the release of radioactivity; and

4) a structure, system or component which operating experience or a probabilistic safety assessment has shown to be significant to public health and safety.

Written comments on the criteria should be received by December 5. They should be addressed to the Secretary of the Commission, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555, Attention: Docketing and Service Branch.

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