



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC SEEKS COMMENTS ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO MATERIAL CONTROL AND ACCOUNTING REGULATIONS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is seeking comments on proposed changes to its material control and accounting regulations for nuclear power plants, fuel cycle facilities and other licensees that possess 350 grams or more of special nuclear materials (uranium-233, enriched uranium, or plutonium).

The changes, which are designed to streamline the regulatory process and provide additional flexibility to licensees, would amend the frequency and timing of reporting requirements for submitting material balance and inventory composition reports. These changes would not affect efforts to fulfill the requirements of the safeguards agreement between the United States and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Currently, licensees that possess 350 grams or more of special nuclear material are required to file the two reports for the period ending March 31 and September 30 of each year. The proposed changes would require licensees to file the reports only once each year, after 60 days of conducting a physical inventory.

The proposed amendments also would broaden the current exclusion from the requirement to perform an environmental assessment before approving amendments to safeguards plans. The exclusion would be made general enough to cover both approvals of safeguards plans and amendments thereto.

In addition, the proposed changes seek to develop safeguards risk-informed requirements for certain types of facilities that are licensed to possess and use between one and five kilograms of moderate to highly enriched special nuclear material. Currently, there is only one such facility in this category, General Atomics Inc. of La Jolla, Calif., which is undergoing decommissioning. Some requirements for these facilities currently are more restrictive than those for facilities licensed to possess larger amounts and more highly enriched nuclear materials. The proposed changes would make material control and accounting requirements more consistent with the safeguards risk posed by the various types of facilities.

The comment period will expire 75 days following publication of the proposed rule in the *Federal Register Notice*, expected shortly. Comments should be submitted to:

Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555-0001, Attn: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff. They can be delivered to 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md., between 7:30 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. on federal workdays. Comments may also be sent electronically via the NRC's interactive rulemaking web site, at <http://ruleforum.llnl.gov> . For information about the interactive rulemaking web site, contact Carol Gallagher at 301-415-5905; e-mail CAG@nrc.gov .

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