



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No. 05-009

January 12, 2005

NRC EXTENDS OPPORTUNITY TO REQUEST USE OF NEW STANDARD FOR ADDRESSING EXISTING FIRE PROTECTION ISSUES

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has extended, to Dec. 31, 2005, the date for nuclear power plant operators to request use of a new, optional fire protection standard to resolve existing issues with a plant's fire protection plans.

The new standard, which focuses resources on issues of the greatest risk significance, was announced in July 2004 and is described in a press release on the NRC's Web site at this address: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/news/2004/04-076.html>. Nuclear power plant operators originally had until Jan. 16 to request the new standard be applied to existing issues.

"The NRC concluded the extension protects public health and safety, since nuclear plant operators must have the means to compensate for any existing problems to be dealt with under the standard," said Sunil Weerakkody, Chief of the Fire Protection Engineering Section in the NRC's Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

The Nuclear Energy Institute asked the NRC, in July 2004, to extend the deadline to Dec. 31 to allow for adequate planning and budgeting by plant operators. NRC staff considered possible safety implications, the need to start bringing fire-protection issues to closure, and other factors before agreeing to the extension.

The NRC's decision, and a companion Enforcement Policy revision, are outlined in a *Federal Register* notice, to be published shortly. The revised policy will be available on the NRC Web site at this address: <http://www.nrc.gov/what-we-do/regulatory/enforcement/enforc-pol.pdf>. The NRC's Public Document Room (phone 800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737) can help interested persons obtain these materials.

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