



NRC NEWS

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NRC PROPOSES EXPANSION OF NATIONAL SOURCE TRACKING SYSTEM

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is proposing to expand its National Source Tracking System (NSTS) to include an additional 3,500 NRC and state licensees and nearly 17,000 additional radioactive sources, to improve accountability and control of radioactive materials.

A proposed rule, to be published shortly in the *Federal Register*, would require the additional licensees to report information on the manufacture, transfer, receipt, disassembly and disposal of these radioactive sources to the NSTS. Manufacturers will be required to assign a unique serial number to each nationally tracked source.

“An expanded National Source Tracking System will enable the NRC and its federal and state partners to improve the security of radioactive materials while ensuring their continued beneficial use in industry, research and medicine,” NRC Chairman Dale E. Klein said.

As established in a final rule published Nov. 8, 2006, the NSTS covers radioactive sources in Categories 1 and 2 as determined by the International Atomic Energy Agency. These sources are typically used in radiothermal generators, irradiators, radiation therapy, industrial gamma radiography and high- and medium-dose-range brachytherapy cancer treatments. That rule covers approximately 1,350 licensees nationwide who possess Category 1 and 2 sources. The system is to be implemented by Jan. 31, 2009.

The proposed rule would expand the NSTS to include Category 3 sources as well as sources in the upper range of Category 4 – or at about 1/10 of the activity threshold for Category 3. These sources include fixed industrial gauges (level gauges, conveyor gauges, thickness gauges, blast furnace gauges, dredger gauges, and pipe gauges); well-logging devices; medium- and low-dose-range brachytherapy; and certain radiography devices.

The NRC considers Category 1 and 2 sources to be the most significant from a security perspective. Expanding the NSTS will guard against the possibility that a small number of Category 3 or 4 radioactive sources could be collected to form a Category 2 amount of radioactive material.

The NRC believes the additional cost to the agency and licensees of an expanded NSTS is reasonable given the additional improvement in accountability and control of radioactive sources.

The NRC will accept public comments on the proposed rule for 75 days following publication. Comments may be mailed to the Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555-0001, ATTN: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff; or e-mailed to SECY@nrc.gov. Each submission should be labeled RIN 3150-AI29.

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