



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NEW PROPOSED “TIME OFF” AMENDMENT TO ITS FITNESS-FOR-DUTY REGULATIONS

The NRC published in the *Federal Register* today a call for public comments on a proposed amendment to its fitness-for-duty rule that would allow nuclear power plants to use a different method to determine when employees must be given time off from work.

The current fitness-for-duty regulations (10 CFR Part 26) went into effect in March 2008. They established, among other requirements, limits on work hours to ensure worker fatigue did not affect plant safety and security. The regulations required licensees to manage cumulative fatigue primarily by providing workers with a minimum number of days off within certain time frames.

Last year, however, two petitions were filed with the NRC raising concerns about the minimum days off requirements. To gather more input, the NRC held three public meetings on the subject, and the Commission was briefed on the subject in February. Last month, the Commission directed the staff to conduct an expedited rulemaking, limited in scope, to provide an alternative to the current minimum days off requirements. Based on Commission direction, the proposed rule is subject only to a 30-day public comment period rather than the usual 75-day comment period.

The proposed rule would allow, but not mandate, an alternative approach to the minimum days off requirements. The alternate approach would still limit the number of consecutive extended work weeks an employee could work, but allow more flexibility in its application. More specifically, as an alternative to the minimum days off requirement, the proposed rule would offer a maximum average 54-hour work week, averaged over a period of up to six weeks for workers who fall under the regulation. A full version of the proposed rule is available here: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2011/2011-9925.htm>.

Comments with the title “Docket ID NRC-2011-0058” can be submitted via www.regulations.gov (search for the docket ID) or can be mailed to Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, ATTN: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff. Comments can also be e-mailed to Rulemaking.Comments@nrc.gov, hand delivered to

11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md., 20852, between 7:30 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. on federal workdays or faxed to Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission at 301-415-1101.

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