



NRC NEWS

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Office of Public Affairs Telephone: 301/415-8200

Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

E-mail: opa.resource@nrc.gov

Site: <http://www.nrc.gov>

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NRC SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO REGULATIONS ON DISTRIBUTION OF URANIUM AND THORIUM

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is seeking public comment on proposed amendments to its regulations regarding the distribution and licensing of unenriched uranium and thorium (also known as source material).

The proposed rule, published July 26 in the *Federal Register*, would require specific licenses for the initial distribution of source material to exempt persons and certain general licensees. Such licenses would impose certain labeling and quality control requirements, as well as new reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

The rule would also modify the existing possession and use requirements for the general license to possess source material. Current NRC regulations allow commercial and industrial firms, research, education and medical institutions, and federal, state and local government agencies to use and transfer up to 15 pounds of source material at any one time, and up to 150 pounds in any one calendar year. The proposed rule would lower those possession limits to 1.5 kilograms (3.3 pounds) and 7 kilograms (15.4 pounds) for source material in a dispersible form or being processed.

Possession limits would not be changed for persons possessing source material in a solid, non-dispersible form (such as display samples of depleted uranium metal) or processing uranium from drinking water.

The proposed rule would also exempt certain lenses coated with source material from licensing, though the manufacturers, some of whom are currently operating under a general license, would require a specific license.

These new license requirements and possession limits are intended to help ensure the protection of public health and safety by ensuring that licensees safely possess source material and that the NRC has a better understanding of how much source material is being distributed annually.

The proposed rule is available at this web address:
<http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-18223.pdf>.

Comments will be accepted for 120 days following publication in the *Federal Register*. Comments may be submitted over the federal government's rulemaking Web site at <http://www.regulations.gov> using Docket ID NRC-2009-0084, by e-mail to Rulemaking.Comments@nrc.gov, or by fax to (301) 415-1101.

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