



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs Telephone: 301/415-8200

Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

E-mail: opa.resource@nrc.gov

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

No. 10-117

June 28, 2010

NRC SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON DRAFT POLICY STATEMENT ON PROTECTION OF CESIUM CHLORIDE RADIATION SOURCES

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is seeking public comment on a draft policy statement on the protection of cesium-137 chloride radiation sources that are widely used in medicine and industry, and will hold a public meeting to solicit stakeholders' input.

The draft policy statement, to be published tomorrow in the *Federal Register*, describes the Commission's proposed policy and expectations on the secure uses of cesium chloride sources and the agency's potential actions should the threat environment change. The draft statement emphasizes that the security of radiation sources is an essential part of the NRC's mission, cesium chloride sources are adequately protected under current NRC requirements, and the NRC encourages voluntary design improvements that could further enhance their security.

Cesium chloride sources are used in blood irradiation, bio-medical and industrial research, and calibration of instrumentation and dosimetry. They have received special attention because the cesium chloride powder is highly soluble and dispersible, presenting security concerns that the sources could be used by terrorists in a radiological dispersal device, or "dirty bomb."

While noting the beneficial uses of cesium chloride radiation sources, the draft policy statement says developing alternative technologies would be "prudent," and states the agency's view that it is "imperative to develop a pathway for the long-term storage and disposal of these sources."

The draft policy statement reflects security improvements imposed by the NRC and state agencies since 2001, as well as a voluntary program initiated by the National Nuclear Security Administration to enhance security beyond NRC requirements. The subject of cesium chloride radiation sources was also addressed by the Interagency Radiation Source Protection and Security Task Force, created by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and chaired by NRC Chairman Gregory B. Jaczko. The task force is scheduled to issue its second report to the President and Congress in August.

Comments on the draft policy statement will be accepted through Dec. 17. They may be submitted through the federal government's rulemaking Web site, <http://www.regulations.gov>, using Docket ID NRC-2010-0209, or by mail to Cindy Bladey, Chief, Rules, Announcements and Directives Branch, Office of Administration, MS: TWB-5 B1M, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001.

The NRC plans to conduct a public meeting on Nov. 16-17 to solicit additional public input on major issues relating to the policy statement. Details on the exact venue will be announced at a later date, but the agency plans to hold the meeting in the vicinity of NRC headquarters in Rockville, Md. Information on the public meeting is posted – and will be continually updated, at <http://www.nrc.gov/materials/miau/licensing.html#cc>.

###

News releases are available through a free *listserv* subscription at the following Web address: <http://www.nrc.gov/public-involve/listserver.html>. The NRC homepage at www.nrc.gov also offers a SUBSCRIBE link. E-mail notifications are sent to subscribers when news releases are posted to NRC's Web site.