



NRC NEWS

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Office of Public Affairs

Telephone: 301/415-8200

Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

E-mail: opa@nrc.gov

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

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NRC PROPOSES NATIONAL TRACKING SYSTEM FOR CERTAIN RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is considering amending its regulations to implement a national tracking system for certain radioactive materials used for academic, medical and industrial purposes.

The NRC is working closely with other federal agencies and the states to develop the National Source Tracking System to track certain radioactive materials in specific quantities. During 2002-2003, the NRC worked with other agencies and the international community to reach agreement on which radioactive materials and sources should be tracked. Those sources are set forth in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources.

The proposed amendment to NRC regulations would require licensees to report information on the manufacture, transfer, receipt or disposal of these sources of interest to an automated National Source Tracking System, to be administered by the NRC. The sources are considered "sealed sources" because they are encased in a capsule designed to prevent leakage or escape of the material. The radioactive materials that will be tracked include, but are not limited to, certain amounts of Cobalt-60, Strontium-90, Cesium-137, Iridium-192 and Americium-241.

Each licensee would also have to provide its initial inventory of nationally tracked sources to the National Source Tracking System and annually verify and reconcile the information in the system with the licensee's actual inventory. In addition, the amendment would require manufacturers to assign a unique serial number to each nationally tracked source.

"This regulation would allow us to better understand and monitor who possesses sources of interest on a national basis," said Charles L. Miller, Director of the NRC's Division of Industrial and Medical Nuclear Safety. "It is consistent with recommendations of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and a joint NRC/Department of Energy report."

Once fully operational, the National Source Tracking System would help NRC and Agreement States (the 33 states that have agreed with the NRC to regulate the medical and industrial uses of radioactive material) to conduct inspections and investigations, communicate nationally tracked source information to other government agencies, and verify legitimate ownership and use of nationally tracked sources. The NRC has developed and is maintaining an interim database of radioactive sources

of interest for both NRC and Agreement State licensees. This database will be maintained until the National Source Tracking System is complete.

Radioactive materials provide critical capabilities in the oil and gas, electrical power, construction and food industries; are used to treat millions of patients each year in diagnostic and therapeutic medical procedures; and are used in technology research and development. In developing its requirements, the NRC seeks to provide appropriate security for the materials without discouraging their beneficial use.

Further details of the proposed amendments to NRC's regulations are contained in a Federal Register notice, to be published soon. Interested persons are invited to submit written comments within 75 days after publication of the Federal Register notice to the Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 2055-0001, Attention: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff. Comments may also be sent by e-mail to SECY@nrc.gov or submitted via the NRC's rulemaking web site at <http://ruleforum.llnl.gov> .

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