

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Public Affairs
Washington, DC 20555
Phone 301-415-8200 Fax 301-415-2234
Internet:opa@nrc.gov

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NRC SEEKS COMMENT ON PERFORMANCE-BASED REGULATORY OVERSIGHT REPORT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is seeking comment on a report, published by the Office of Research, which describes a process for "performance-based" regulation of nuclear power plants.

Performance-based oversight uses objective data to monitor several key areas important to safety. These areas include, among others, certain initiating events which could lead to more serious problems; the integrity of barriers to contain radioactivity; and emergency preparedness.

This type of regulation also seeks to focus on the most important safety issues, and less on prescriptive regulations, which are sometimes subjective. The goal is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the plant oversight process.

The newly issued report is entitled "Elements of an Approach to Performance-Based Regulatory Oversight, (NUREG/CR-5392)." Its purpose is to promote a better understanding of how such a regulatory approach would work. It builds on a proposal advanced NRC some time ago by the Nuclear Energy Institute, an industry group, and uses actual examples of plant problems.

Those who wish to comment on the report may do so within 60 days. The report is located on an NRC-sponsored website, at <http://techconf.llnl.gov>. The website is an electronic technical conference and provides specific instructions on how to participate. Printed copies may be ordered by telephoning the Government Printing Office at 202/512-1800. Comments are requested on developing criteria for identifying candidate regulatory activities which could be made more performance-based, including those that may not be amenable to risk assessments.

NRC will use comments received on the report in its ongoing program to structure a more results-oriented regulatory program based on both plant performance and risk assessment factors.

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