



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No. 01-098

August 8, 2001

NRC SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON PROPOSED RULE ALLOWING PARTS OF REACTOR SITES TO BE RELEASED FOR UNRESTRICTED USE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is seeking public comment on a proposed rule that will standardize the process for permitting nuclear power plant licensees to release parts of their facilities or sites for unrestricted use before the reactor operating license has been terminated.

At present, NRC regulations do not directly address the release of part of a reactor facility or site before the NRC approves a license termination plan. The license termination plan describes the steps to be followed to decommission a reactor facility and to satisfy radioactive exposure criteria in NRC regulations in order to allow release of the site for other uses.

Recently, several NRC reactor licensees have expressed interest in releasing parts of their sites. The proposed rule is directed at operating and decommissioning reactor facilities and does not include other nuclear facilities, such as those engaged in fuel fabrication.

NRC has issued a Regulatory Information Summary (RIS 2000-19) that provides interim guidance to licensees pursuing partial site releases before the rule is issued. Licensees that follow the RIS would provide information to the NRC to support case-by-case reviews of proposed releases.

Under the proposed rule, the NRC will conduct reviews and inspections to ensure that strict radiological criteria will be met. The NRC will publish a public notice when it receives a licensee's proposal for a partial site release, seek public comments, and hold a public meeting in the vicinity of the power plant.

The NRC believes that the proposed rule will help maintain safety by establishing a consistent process for considering partial site releases. The proposed rule will add a new section to Part 50 of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Interested persons are invited to submit comments on the proposed rule within 75 days after publication of a Federal Register notice on this subject, expected shortly. Comments may be sent to the Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, Attention:

Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff. Comments may also be submitted electronically via the NRC's interactive rulemaking web site at: <http://ruleforum.llnl.gov>