

## **NRC NEWS**

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## NRC Seeks Comment on Proposed Revision to Acceptance Criteria For Emergency Cooling Systems at U.S. Reactors

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is seeking comment on a proposed change to agency regulations regarding the acceptance criteria for emergency systems to cool the reactor core if an accident occurred at a U.S. nuclear power plant.

The proposed rule reflects recent research findings that identified new damage mechanisms for zirconium alloy-covered fuel rods during a loss-of-coolant accident. The proposed rule would also apply to all fuel types and cladding materials, as well as address a petition for rulemaking regarding crud, oxide deposits and hydrogen content in zirconium-alloy fuel cladding. The proposed rule would ensure an acceptable level of fuel rod performance following a loss-of-coolant accident, providing adequate protection of public health and safety. The proposed rule would also provide licensees the option to use risk-informed methods to address the effects of debris during long-term cooling following a loss-of-coolant accident.

The proposed rule is not part of the NRC's response to the 2011 events at Fukushima, but an outcome of a Nuclear Energy Institute petition for rulemaking in 2000, direction given to the staff by -+ the Commission in 2003, and findings of a 10-year research program ending in 2008. Thus, the development of the proposed rule pre-dates the Japan events by several years.

For more information on the proposed rule, contact NRC staff members Tara Inverso by phone at 301-415-1024 or via e-mail tara.inverso@nrc.gov; or Paul M. Clifford by phone 301-415-4043, via e-mail paul.clifford@nrc.gov.

Comments on the changes will be accepted until June 9, following publication of the proposed rule in the *Federal Register*. The *Federal Register* notice also opens a comment period for three related draft regulatory guides. The notice includes instructions and the relevant Docket IDs for submitting comments on both the rule and on the guides. Comments may be submitted on the Regulations.gov website; by e-mail to Rulemaking. Comments@nrc.gov; hand delivered to: 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md., between 7:30 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. (EST) federal workdays; telephone: 301-415-1677; mailed to

Secretary

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or submitted by fax to: Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission at 301-415-1101.