



NRC NEWS

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NRC PROPOSES AMENDING REGULATIONS FOR STRUCTURES, SYSTEMS AND COMPONENTS FOR NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS BASED ON SAFETY SIGNIFICANCE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is proposing to amend its regulations to revise certain regulatory controls for structures, systems and components (SSCs) at nuclear power plants based on their safety significance.

NRC regulations call for conservative safety margins, strict procedural controls and multiple safety systems to establish defense-in-depth for the protection of public health and safety. Special regulatory controls -- rigorous design qualifications, record-keeping, maintenance and testing requirements -- are used to ensure that SSCs necessary to safely shut down a nuclear reactor and prevent off-site releases function effectively during and after an accident.

Due to the evolving nature of nuclear reactor safety regulations, these requirements encompass a very broad scope of SSCs -- some of which are very important to safety; others of which, experience and new analytical techniques indicate, provide only minimal, or a negligible contribution to safety, thereby possibly focusing NRC staff and licensee resources on issues of minor safety significance.

The proposed changes use up-to-date analytic tools and risk insights, and further enhance plant safety by enabling nuclear power plant licensees to more precisely determine the safety significance of SSC's. If licensees choose to use the proposed alternative approach, some SSCs of "low safety significance" would be subject to less stringent requirements than currently exist. Conversely, some SSCs of greater significance would now be subject to new requirements. This would enable both nuclear power plant licensees and the NRC to more efficiently focus their resources on issues of greater safety significance. In addition to the proposed rulemaking, the NRC staff will issue a draft regulatory guide for public comment.

Interested persons are invited to submit written comments on the proposed amendments to NRC regulations within 75 days after publication of a *Federal Register* notice, expected shortly. The comments should be addressed to the Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory

Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, Attention: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff.
Comments may also be submitted via the NRC's interactive rulemaking web site at
<http://ruleforum.llnl.gov>