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NRC Updates Agency's Consumer Products Policy Statement

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is revising its policy statement on consumer products containing radioactive material. The revisions, published today in the [Federal Register](#), bring the statement up to date but do not represent a policy shift.

The Atomic Energy Commission issued the original Consumer Products Policy Statement in 1965 because, although presenting very low risks of significant individual doses to members of the general public, consumer products containing radioactive material are a source of routine exposure to the public. For example, many people use and benefit from smoke detectors, and consequently receive a very small radiation exposure from this product. The revisions update terminology and reflect changes in the theory and practice of radiation protection as it has evolved since 1965.

The policy statement incorporates the three fundamental principles of radiation protection: Justification of a practice; optimization of protection (the “As Low As Reasonably Achievable” practice, or ALARA); and application of dose limits to individuals. For example, under the policy, approval of a proposed consumer product depends on both the resulting exposures to radiation and the apparent usefulness of the product. The policy calls for monitoring the amounts of radioactive materials being distributed for public use and reconsidering the policy if there is any indication these may result in a significant fraction of the permissible dose. Well-informed regulatory decisions in this area can have a significant effect on minimizing cumulative exposures to the public.

A proposed update to the policy was published Oct. 14, 2011, for public comment in the *Federal Register*. The NRC received four comment letters. Comments are addressed in today's *Federal Register* notice. More information about consumer products is available on [the NRC blog](#).