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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
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001
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or submitted by fax to: Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission at 301-415-1101.