

**NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**

**10 CFR Parts 9 and 35**

**[NRC-2018-0303]**

**RIN 3150-AK27**

**Social Security Number Fraud Prevention**

**AGENCY:** Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**ACTION:** Proposed rule.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is proposing to amend its regulations to implement the Social Security Number Fraud Prevention Act of 2017.

This statute directed agencies to issue regulations that prohibit the inclusion of an individual's Social Security account number (Social Security number or SSN) on any document sent through the mail unless the head of the agency deems it necessary and the appropriate precautions are taken to protect the Social Security number. Applicants, licensees, and members of the public who are required to submit a form containing a Social Security number may be affected.

**DATES:** Submit comments by July 2, 2020. Comments received after this date will be considered if it is practical to do so, but the NRC is able to ensure consideration only for comments received on or before this date.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- **Federal Rulemaking Web Site:** Go to <https://www.regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID NRC-2018-0303. Address questions about NRC dockets to Carol Gallagher; telephone: 301-415-3463; e-mail: [Carol.Gallagher@nrc.gov](mailto:Carol.Gallagher@nrc.gov). For technical questions contact the individual listed in the FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT section of this document.

- **E-mail comments to:** [Rulemaking.Comments@nrc.gov](mailto:Rulemaking.Comments@nrc.gov). If you do not receive an automatic e-mail reply confirming receipt, then contact us at 301-415-1677.

- **Mail comments to:** Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, ATTN: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff.

For additional direction on obtaining information and submitting comments, see “Obtaining Information and Submitting Comments” in the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION section of this document.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Alexa Sieracki, Office of Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington DC 20555-0001; telephone: 301-415-7509, e-mail: [Alexa.Sieracki@nrc.gov](mailto:Alexa.Sieracki@nrc.gov).

## **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

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## **I. Obtaining Information and Submitting Comments**

### **A. Obtaining Information**

Please refer to Docket ID NRC-2018-0303 when contacting the NRC about the availability of information for this action. You may obtain publicly-available information related to this action by any of the following methods:

- **Federal Rulemaking Web Site:** Go to <https://www.regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID NRC-2018-0303.
- **NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS):** You may obtain publicly-available documents online in the ADAMS Public Documents collection at <https://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. To begin the search, select "[Begin Web-based ADAMS Search](#)." For problems with ADAMS, please contact the NRC's Public Document Room (PDR) reference staff at 1-800-397-4209, 301-415-4737, or by e-mail to [pdr.resource@nrc.gov](mailto:pdr.resource@nrc.gov).
- **Attention:** The [Public Document Room \(PDR\)](#), where you may examine and order copies of public documents is currently closed. You may submit your request to the PDR via e-mail at [PDR.Resource@nrc.gov](mailto:PDR.Resource@nrc.gov) or call 1-800-397-4209 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. (EST), Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

## B. Submitting Comments

Please include Docket ID NRC-2018-0303 in your comment submission.

The NRC cautions you not to include identifying or contact information that you do not want to be publicly disclosed in your comment submission. The NRC will post all comment submissions at <https://www.regulations.gov> as well as enter the comment submissions into ADAMS. The NRC does not routinely edit comment submissions to remove identifying or contact information.

If you are requesting or aggregating comments from other persons for submission to the NRC, then you should inform those persons not to include identifying or contact information that they do not want to be publicly disclosed in their comment

submission. Your request should state that the NRC does not routinely edit comment submissions to remove such information before making the comment submissions available to the public or entering the comment into ADAMS.

## **II. Procedural Background**

Because the NRC anticipates that this action will be non-controversial, the NRC is publishing this proposed rule concurrently with a direct final rule in the Rules and Regulations section of this issue of the *Federal Register*. The direct final rule will become effective on August 17, 2020. However, if the NRC receives significant adverse comments by July 2, 2020, then the NRC will publish a document that withdraws the direct final rule. If the direct final rule is withdrawn, the NRC will address the comments in a subsequent final rule. Absent significant modifications to the proposed revisions requiring republication, the NRC will not initiate a second comment period on this action in the event the direct final rule is withdrawn.

A significant adverse comment is a comment where the commenter explains why the rule would be inappropriate, including challenges to the rule's underlying premise or approach, or would be ineffective or unacceptable without a change. A comment is adverse and significant if it meets the following criteria:

1) The comment opposes the rule and provides a reason sufficient to require a substantive response in a notice-and-comment process. For example, a substantive response is required in the following circumstances:

a) The comment causes the NRC to reevaluate (or reconsider) its position or conduct additional analysis;

b) The comment raises an issue serious enough to warrant a substantive response to clarify or complete the record; or

c) The comment raises a relevant issue that was not previously addressed or considered by the NRC.

2) The comment proposes a change or an addition to the rule, and it is apparent that the rule would be ineffective or unacceptable without incorporation of the change or addition.

3) The comment causes the NRC to make a change (other than editorial) to the rule.

For procedural information and the regulatory analysis, see the direct final rule published in the Rules and Regulations section of this issue of the *Federal Register*.

### **III. Discussion**

The President signed into law the Social Security Number Fraud Prevention Act of 2017 (the Act) on September 15, 2017, to reduce the risk of identity theft by directing agencies to “issue regulations specifying the circumstances under which inclusion of a social security account number on a document sent by mail is necessary.”<sup>1</sup> The Act restricts the inclusion of an SSN on any document sent by mail “unless the head of the agency determines that the inclusion of the SSN on the document is necessary.”<sup>2</sup> The Act directs agencies to issue regulations that specify when inclusion of an SSN is necessary, include instructions for the partial redaction of SSNs where feasible, and provide a requirement that SSNs not be visible on the outside of any package sent by mail.<sup>3</sup> These regulations must be issued no later than 5 years after the date of enactment of the Act.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Law 115-59, Section 2(b)

<sup>2</sup> Public Law 115-59, Section 2(a)

<sup>3</sup> Public Law 115-59, Section 2(b)(1)-(2)

The NRC determined that rulemaking was necessary because the Act requires the NRC to amend its regulations. This effort could not be achieved through issuing guidance, as guidance documents are not legally binding and cannot be used to amend regulations. The NRC's rulemaking is narrowly tailored to address the requirements specifically set forth in the Act; therefore, the NRC determined that the direct final rule process was appropriate because the amendments are required by statute, expected to be non-controversial, and unlikely to yield public comment resulting in a significant change to the NRC's proposal. A direct final rule is preferable to a final rule because it allows for the opportunity for public comment, should there be any additional regulations that the public identifies as needing amendment or any additional considerations the NRC needs to evaluate to implement the Act.

#### **IV. Plain Writing**

The Plain Writing Act of 2010 (Pub. L. 111-274) requires Federal agencies to write documents in a clear, concise, well-organized manner. The NRC has written this document to be consistent with the Plain Writing Act as well as the Presidential Memorandum, "Plain Language in Government Writing," published June 10, 1998 (63 FR 31883). The NRC requests comment on the proposed rule with respect to clarity and effectiveness of the language used.

#### **V. Paperwork Reduction Act**

This proposed rule does not contain any new or amended collections of information subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.). Existing

collections of information were approved by the Office of Management and Budget, approval numbers 3150-0043, 3150-0014, 3150-0046, and 3150-0010.

### **Public Protection Notification**

The NRC may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless the document requesting or requiring the collection displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Dated: May 28, 2020.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

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Annette L. Vietti-Cook,  
Secretary of the Commission.