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NRC REVISES CRITERIA FOR REPORTING
ABNORMAL OCCURRENCES TO CONGRESS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is revising the criteria used to determine which licensee events will be included in its annual abnormal occurrence report to Congress.

The revisions are meant to better define which events are significant enough to qualify as abnormal occurrences. The new criteria are consistent with recent changes in NRC regulations and are based on more specific reporting thresholds to permit easier and more consistent evaluation of events.

The Energy Reorganization Act of 1974 requires the Commission to submit the abnormal occurrence reports to Congress. The Act defines an abnormal occurrence as an unscheduled incident or event that the Commission has determined to be significant from the standpoint of public health and safety. For each occurrence, the report must contain the date and place, the nature and probable consequence, the cause or causes, and any action taken to prevent recurrence.

Examples of incidents that will be reported to Congress under the revised criteria include:

- (1) An unintended radiation dose to an adult of 25 rems or more during a one-year period. (Under NRC regulations, the permissible dose limits are 5 rems per year for workers and 0.1 rem per year for members of the public.)
- (2) An unintended medical administration that exceeds limits set out in the criteria and represents either a dose that is at least 50 percent greater than the dose prescribed, or a prescribed dose that is (a) the wrong radiopharmaceutical; (b) delivered by the wrong route of administration; (c) delivered to the wrong treatment site; (d) delivered by the wrong treatment mode; or (e) involving a leaking radioactive source.

A proposed version of the revised criteria was published in the Federal Register for public comment on January 9, 1996. Changes made as a result of the comments received are described in a Federal Register notice published on December 19.

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