



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC PROPOSES AMENDING COMBUSTIBLE GAS CONTROL STANDARDS FOR NUCLEAR POWER REACTORS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is proposing to amend its standards for combustible gas control in nuclear power reactors by setting new containment system baseline regulations for current licensees, as well as consolidating such regulations for future applicants and licensees.

The proposal stems from the Commission's ongoing efforts to increase use of risk information in its regulations. It would impact current and future nuclear power reactor licensees by relaxing or eliminating the requirements for equipment presently used to control combustible gases (hydrogen and oxygen) for nuclear power plant containment following a loss-of-coolant accident which each reactor is designed to withstand. In addition, the Commission proposes to relax the requirements for oxygen and hydrogen monitoring equipment to reflect their risk-informed significance.

Over the past 20 years, the NRC has sponsored a research program to improve its understanding of combustible gas generation and behavior in nuclear power reactors during accidents. The studies showed that the hydrogen release stemming from a design-basis loss-of-coolant accident was not risk significant because it would not lead to early containment failure. Therefore, some hydrogen monitoring and control equipment requirements can be relaxed without compromising safety. Sufficient capability remains to mitigate any longer term challenges to containment integrity.

Along with the rulemaking, the NRC is also proposing a draft regulatory guide, a draft standard review plan, and a Consolidated Line Item Improvement Process for the necessary draft technical specifications to implement the proposed rule.

Comments may be submitted within 75 days after publication of a *Federal Register* notice on this subject, expected shortly. Those comments received after this date will be considered if it is practical to do so, but the Commission is only able to ensure consideration of those received on or before this date.

Please submit comments to the Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555-0001, Attention: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff. Comments can be delivered to: 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, between 7:30 a.m. and 4:15 on Federal weekdays.

They can also be provided via the NRC's interactive rulemaking web site at <http://ruleforum.llnl.gov> . For information about the interactive rulemaking web site, contact Carol Gallagher, at 301-415-5905, e-mail: CAG@nrc.gov

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