

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.
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Conversion to the Metric System

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Policy statement; request for public comment.

SUMMARY: On October 7, 1992, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) published its policy statement on Conversion to the Metric System in the Federal Register. The policy called for the Commission to assess the state of metric use by the licensed nuclear industry in the United States after 3 years to determine whether the policy should be modified. The purpose of this notice is to gain additional information on the state of metric use by NRC licensees so that the Commission may determine whether the NRC's metrication policy should be modified.

DATES: The comment period expires on December 11, 1995. Comments received after this time will be considered if it is practical to do so, but assurance of consideration cannot be given except for comments received on or before this date.

ADDRESSES: Mail written comments to the Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555, Attention: Docketing and Service Branch. Deliver comments to One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, between 7:30 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. on Federal workdays. Comments may also be delivered to the NRC Public Document Room, 2120 L Street NW. (Lower Level), Washington, DC, between 7:45 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. Copies of comments received may be examined at the NRC Public Document Room. For information on submitting comments electronically, see the discussion under Electronic Access in the Supplementary Information Section.
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Frank A. Costanzi, Chairman, NRC Metrication Oversight Committee, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555; telephone (301) 415-6250; e-mail FAC@nrc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On October 7, 1992 (57 FR 46202), the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) published its policy statement on

Conversion to the Metric System¹ in the Federal Register. The statement was in response to the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988 (the Act) and Executive Order 12770. The policy supports and encourages the use of the metric system of measurement and requires the NRC to follow the Federal Acquisition Regulation and the General Services Administration metrication program in executing procurements. It further requires the NRC to publish essentially all documents which are not specific to a given licensee in dual units, i.e., International System of Units first with the English unit in brackets. A key component of the policy requires that "should the NRC conclude that the use of any particular system of measurement be detrimental to the public health and safety, the Commission will proscribe, by regulation, order, or other appropriate means, the use of that system." As a result, the policy requires that all event reporting and emergency response communications between licensees and any Government authorities will be in the English system of measurement. Finally, the policy calls for the Commission to assess the state of metric use by the licensed nuclear industry in the United States after three years to determine whether the policy should be modified.

In order to implement this last portion of the policy, the NRC staff has undertaken several actions. First, the NRC's Metrication Oversight Committee met to discuss both agency and licensee experiences with the Commission's metrication policy. Next, representatives of various industrial and standards groups were contacted to determine their association's view of the policy. The associations contacted included the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc. (IEEE), the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI), the Nuclear Utility Backfitting and Reform Group (NUBARG), the United States Pharmacopeial Convention, Inc. (USP), the Society of Nuclear Medicine, and the Organization of Agreement States (OAS). The Committee's findings follow.

¹The metric system refers to units belonging to the Internationale System of Units, which is abbreviated SI (from the French Le Systeme Internationale d'Units), as interpreted or modified for use in the United States by the Secretary of Commerce.

Comments Received

With few exceptions, these various organizations stated their support for the current NRC policy. The nuclear power industry position seems to be exemplified by the NEI comments in which they continue to support the current NRC Metrication Policy and "a transition to the metric system that is market-driven and avoids a sudden or precipitous move to conduct licensing and regulatory matters in metric units." Similarly, although NUBARG did not respond in writing, a phone conversation with a representative indicated that NUBARG was "very comfortable" with the NRC's metrication policy.

As for the standards-setting groups, ASME strongly supports the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act and believes that the NRC policy is in accordance with those requirements. IEEE related that its "standards are to be primarily metric beginning in 1998 and, with minor exceptions, *exclusively* metric beginning in 2000." Also, IEEE believes that the United States Government "can and should do more than it has done to further the metrication process in this country." In response to the NRC's request, IEEE provided the following three comments relating directly to the NRC's position: (1) The NRC should drop the use of dual units in its publications and to use "metric units exclusively except where doing so would clearly be detrimental to public health and safety."

(2) The NRC policy of using the English system for all event reporting and emergency response communications, although prudent in 1992, may now cause confusion and have a negative impact after various relevant standards have been converted.

(3) The NRC should include the following statement in its policy: "Nothing in this statement of policy should be interpreted to require the use of the English system of measurement, or to forbid the use of consensus based standards that are exclusively metric." This was proposed so elements of the private sector that wish to move faster than the Government may be protected.

The USP pointed out that the use of dual units by NRC is in line with USP's position and practice. However, the OAS position is that "to be truly responsive to Congress the Commission now should go on record as requiring the use of SI units in *all* its communication and documentation." OAS recommended that the NRC "support the dual citation standard with the SI unit appearing first and the English or special units following in

brackets or parentheses . . .” to accommodate the editing style of the various States.

Comments have not been received from the remaining groups.

Status of Licensee Metrication Efforts

Reactors

Although there are no power reactor licensees operating in the metric system, some of the advanced reactors have vendor-generated licensing documents that use the metric system of measurement. For example, both of General Electric's applications for the ABWR and SBWR designs have their Standard Safety Analysis Reports (SSAR) in the SI system of measurement. However, both the Westinghouse AP600 and the ABB-CE System 80+ have their SSARs in the traditional inch-pound system. The NRC's completed Final Safety Evaluation Reports (FSER) for the System 80+ and the ABWR are in dual units as prescribed by the Commission's policy statement. When the FSERs for the AP600 and the SBWR are published, they also will be in dual units.

Selected Examples of Metric Usage

There are varying degrees of use of the metric system of measurement by the non-power reactor nuclear industries. Also, within a particular profession or industry, there are varying degrees of metric use. For example, in the field of radiation oncology, the centigray (an SI unit) has been the meter of therapy doses, while the millicurie and curie (traditional units) are used as the measure expressing quantity or dosages.

Health Physics

It is also the case that most of the operational health physics community still uses the traditional system of measurement because of the use of instrumentation that is calibrated or expressed in that system. Some newer instrumentation that offers dual-unit options will assist in metric conversion, as the new instruments are being integrated into existing stock.

Public Comment

The NRC staff, through this request, is inviting comment from interested individuals on the NRC's metrication efforts to learn if there is a need for the Commission to revise its metrication policy.

Electronic Access

Comments may be submitted electronically, in either ASCII text or Wordperfect format (version 5.1 or later), by calling the NRC Electronic Bulletin Board on FedWorld. The

bulletin board may be accessed using a personal computer, a modem, and one of the commonly available communications software packages, or directly via Internet.

If using a personal computer and modem, the NRC subsystem on FedWorld can be accessed directly by dialing the toll free number: 1-800-303-9672. Communication software parameters should be set as follows: Parity to none, data bits to 8, and stop bits to 1 (N,8,1). Using ANSI or VT-100 terminal emulation, the NRC rulemaking subsystems can then be accessed by selecting the "Rules Menu" option from the "NRC Main Menu." For further information about options available for NRC at FedWorld consult the "Help/Information Center" from the "NRC Main Menu." Users will find the "FedWorld Online User's Guides" particularly helpful. Many NRC subsystems and databases also have a "Help/Information Center" option that is tailored to the particular subsystem.

The NRC subsystem on FedWorld can also be accessed by a direct dial phone number for the main FedWorld BBS: 703-321-8020; Telnet via Internet: fedworld.gov (192.239.93.3); File Transfer Protocol (FTP) via Internet: ftp.fedworld.gov (192.239.92.205); and World Wide Web using: http://www.fedworld.gov (this is the Uniform Resource Locator (URL)). If using a method other than the toll free number to contact FedWorld, then the NRC subsystem will be accessed from the main FedWorld menu by selecting the "F—Regulatory, Government Administration and State Systems", then selecting "A—Regulatory Information Mall". At that point, a menu will be displayed that has an option "A—U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission" that will take you to the NRC Online main menu. You can also go directly to the NRC Online area by typing "/go nrc" at a FedWorld command line. If you access NRC from FedWorld's main menu, then you may return to FedWorld by selecting the "Return to FedWorld" option from the NRC Online Main Menu. However, if you access NRC at FedWorld by using NRC's toll-free number, you will have full access to all NRC systems but you will not have access to the main FedWorld system. For more information on NRC bulletin boards call Mr. Arthur Davis, Systems Integration and Development Branch, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555, telephone (301) 415-5780; e-mail AXD3@nrc.gov.

Lastly, the Act has a reporting requirement for Federal agencies to include an annual metric report as part

of their annual budget submission to the Congress. The reporting requirement expires in the fiscal year after an agency has fully implemented metric usage. Unless the Commission receives comment which would require it to revise its policy, it will consider its policy final and its conversion to the metric system complete.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland this 14th day of September 1995.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

James M. Taylor,

Executive Director for Operations.

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Biweekly Notice

Applications and Amendments to Facility Operating Licenses Involving No Significant Hazards Considerations

I. Background

Pursuant to Public Law 97-415, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission or NRC staff) is publishing this regular biweekly notice. Public Law 97-415 revised section 189 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act), to require the Commission to publish notice of any amendments issued, or proposed to be issued, under a new provision of section 189 of the Act. This provision grants the Commission the authority to issue and make immediately effective any amendment to an operating license upon a determination by the Commission that such amendment involves no significant hazards consideration, notwithstanding the pendency before the Commission of a request for a hearing from any person.

This biweekly notice includes all notices of amendments issued, or proposed to be issued from August 30, 1995, through September 15, 1995. The last biweekly notice was published on Wednesday, September 13, 1995 (60 FR 47613).

Notice Of Consideration Of Issuance Of Amendments To Facility Operating Licenses, Proposed No Significant Hazards Consideration Determination, And Opportunity For A Hearing

The Commission has made a proposed determination that the following amendment requests involve no significant hazards consideration. Under the Commission's regulations in 10 CFR 50.92, this means that operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed amendment would not (1) involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an