The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Mission

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) was established by Congress in 1974 as an independent regulatory agency. The NRC licenses and regulates the Nation's civilian use of radioactive materials to protect public health and safety, promote the common defense and security, and protect the environment.

The NRC's Regulatory Mission covers three main areas:

Reactors–Commercial reactors for generating electric power and research and test reactors used for research, testing, and training.

Materials–Uses of nuclear materials in medical, industrial, and academic settings and facilities that produce nuclear fuel.

Waste–Transportation, storage, and disposal of nuclear materials and waste, and decommissioning of nuclear facilities from service.

NRC Locations:

The NRC's headquarters office is located in Rockville, MD, and its regional offices are located in King of Prussia, PA; Atlanta, GA; Lisle, IL; and Arlington, TX.

For Additional NRC Information see:

The agency's public Web site:
http://www.nrc.gov

State and Tribal Program page:
http://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/state-tribal.html

https://scp.nrc.gov/

Emergency Preparedness and Response page:
http://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/emerg-preparedness.html

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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U.S.NRC
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Protecting People and the Environment

STATE PROGRAMS AT THE U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

The NRC's Interactions with States

The NRC is committed to working in collaboration with States. Through many State-focused policies and programs, the NRC strives to do the following:

- Keep States informed on topics of mutual interest.
- Provide States with opportunities to participate in the NRC's regulatory processes.
- Provide assistance to State activities when appropriate.
- Maintain oversight when States assume regulatory authority from the NRC for specific radioactive materials and activities.

The NRC has dedicated staff members in its various offices who routinely interact with their State counterparts through meetings, conferences, and outreach activities. These activities include developing State-specific communications and participating in State organizations and national groups. Through these interactions, the NRC staff keeps the agency and the States informed of relevant activities, views, and interests to support ongoing cooperation.

Coordination on Emergency Preparedness and Incident Response

The NRC and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) cooperate on radiological emergency planning and preparedness at NRC-licensed facilities. The responsibilities for each agency are outlined in a joint memorandum of understanding. FEMA has the lead responsibility for assessing State and local (offsite) emergency planning. FEMA reports the results of their assessments to the NRC, and the NRC factors these results into its decisionmaking processes.

The NRC's Incident Response Program regularly coordinates with States by participating in licensee emergency preparedness exercises and by periodically inviting senior state officials to observe the NRC emergency exercises at its Headquarters Operations Center. In the unlikely event of an actual incident, the NRC would frequently communicate with the State and support the actions of State and local authorities.

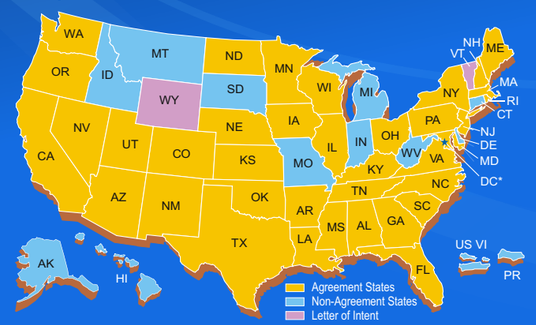
Agreement State Program

Under the Agreement State Program, some States have signed formal agreements with the NRC that allow the State assume regulatory authority over certain types of radioactive material. The program was established in 1959, with the first agreement signed in 1962. Once a State signs such an agreement, it is commonly referred to as an Agreement State. Currently, there are 37 Agreement States.

The NRC provides support and assistance to Agreement States, which start when a State expresses interest to sign an agreement and continues after an agreement is signed. Although Agreement States assumes regulatory authority over some radioactive materials, the NRC interacts with and supports Agreement States through some of the following actions:

- Sponsors and conducts technical training courses and workshops.
- Evaluates State regulatory changes to ensure compatibility with NRC requirements.
- Provides opportunities for early and substantive involvement in NRC rulemaking and other regulatory efforts.

While the NRC relinquishes regulatory authority, the agency still maintains an oversight role by conducting periodic reviews of Agreement State programs. This is accomplished through the NRC's Integrated Materials Performance Evaluation Program, which was established in 1995. The goal of this review is to ensure that States' programs adequately protect public health and safety from radiological hazards and operate in a manner consistent with the NRC's regulatory program. Under the Agreement State Program, NRC and its State partners safely and securely regulate nearly 21,000 radioactive material licenses.



State Liaison Officer Program

In 1976, the NRC adopted a recommendation from several State organizations, including the National Governors Association, that each Governor appoint a single person to act as a liaison to the NRC to help improve cooperation and two-way communication.

State liaison officers, with support from NRC staff, perform a number of activities, such as the following:

- Keeping Governors informed of NRC updates.
- Coordinating with State and local agencies and counterparts on NRC-related activities.
- Answering questions from and providing information to the NRC.
- Providing communication and support to State, local, and Federal emergency agencies during emergency events at NRC-regulated facilities.

The State liaison officers possess diverse backgrounds and qualifications, and they generally work for State agencies that focus on protecting public health, safety, and the environment. Each regional office of the NRC has designated staff whose main responsibility is to communicate with the State liaison officers in that region.

Advance Notification of Radioactive Material Shipments

The NRC and the Agreement States have regulations that require their licensees to provide advance notification to the Governor (or the Governor's designated representative) as well as to the Tribal official of participating Tribes (or the Tribal official's designee), before shipping certain types of radioactive material within or across the boundary of the State or the Tribe's land. Advance notification is required for shipments of the following:

- Irradiated reactor fuel
- Large quantities of nuclear waste meeting certain criteria
- Specified quantities of other radioactive material

The NRC maintains a list of the contact information for all State and Tribal representatives designated to receive the advance notification.

On the cover: photo at the top right of Limerick Nuclear Power Plant is courtesy of Exelon Nuclear, and photo at the top left of the portable nuclear gauge is courtesy of APNGA.