



**UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**

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**ANNOUNCEMENT NO. 6**

**DATE:** January 17, 1991

**TO:** All NRC Employees

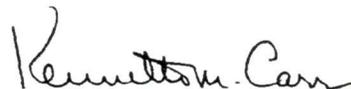
**SUBJECT:** PRINCIPLES OF GOOD REGULATION

During the past year, the Commission has developed a set of Principles of Good Regulation, which we believe will help improve NRC's operations over time. These Principles were recently published in NRC's Five Year Plan for 1991-1995. I have attached a copy of the Principles with this announcement to ensure that every NRC employee has an opportunity to read and become familiar with them.

These Principles of Good Regulation should serve as a guide to both agency decision-making and to individual behavior as NRC employees. Diligent adherence to the Principles by every employee should help ensure that our regulatory activities are of the highest quality, appropriate, and consistent.

I therefore urge you to read the attachment carefully and to think consciously of how the Principles apply to your NRC activities. I also urge managers to ensure that all their employees fully understand the implications of the Principles and to help their employees in applying them.

We already have an organization with high standards and an excellent performance record. My fellow Commissioners and I, in articulating these Principles, hope that we have laid the groundwork for ensuring the continuation of high standards of performance and professionalism within the NRC and for improved recognition outside the NRC of the standards of excellence we strive to meet.

  
Kenneth M. Carr

EXCERPT FROM THE SUMMARY OF THE FY 1991-1995 FIVE YEAR PLAN  
NOVEMBER 1990

MISSION

The U.S. Congress has determined that the safe use of nuclear materials for peaceful purposes is a legitimate and important national goal. It has entrusted the NRC with the primary Federal responsibility for achieving that goal. NRC's mission, therefore, is to ensure adequate protection for the public health and safety, the common defense and security, and the environment, in the use of nuclear materials in the United States.

NRC's scope of responsibility includes regulation of commercial nuclear power plants; research, test, and training reactors; fuel cycle facilities; medical, academic, and industrial uses of nuclear materials; and the transport, storage, and disposal of nuclear materials and wastes. NRC carries out its mission by setting standards and requirements licensees must meet to design, construct, and operate safe facilities, in the form of rules, license conditions, and regulatory guidance; inspecting facilities and taking enforcement action as necessary to ensure that such standards are followed; and conducting research to support, confirm, or refine judgments used in regulatory decisions. The technologies involved in the use of nuclear energy are relatively new and complex. Regulatory decisions often require conservatism to account for technical uncertainty. Conservatism should be modified appropriately as increased understanding of physical phenomena and interactions is achieved. Further, essential functions must be maintained through appropriate combinations of high component and system reliability, redundancy, and diversity to provide multiple barriers to the release of radiation (defense in depth).

REGULATORY PRINCIPLES

The NRC and its licensees share a common responsibility to protect the public health and safety. Federal regulations and the NRC regulatory program are important elements in the protection of the public. However, the Commission recognizes that safe use of nuclear materials is a primary responsibility of NRC licensees. Strong, vigilant management and a desire to improve performance are prerequisites for success, for both regulators and the regulated industry.

The NRC adheres to the following Principles of Good Regulation to encourage consistently high performance and address inadequate performance:

Good regulation identifies the conditions necessary to ensure safety and creates an environment which insists on compliance with established standards while allowing and encouraging licensees to take the lead in maintaining excellence and to exercise initiative in identifying and solving potential as well as actual problems. Good regulation encourages sound and effective practices, discourages unsound practices, and identifies questionable practices. It must, therefore, establish standards by which to judge practices, and the means to encourage the sound and discourage the unsound. To accomplish this, regulation must be:

INDEPENDENT. Nothing but the highest possible standards of ethical performance and professionalism should influence regulation. However, independence does not imply isolation. All available facts and opinions must be sought openly from licensees and other interested members of the public. The many and possibly conflicting public interests involved must be considered. Final decisions must be based on objective, unbiased assessments of all information, and must be documented with reasons explicitly stated.

OPEN. Nuclear regulation is the public's business, and it must be transacted publicly and candidly. The public must be informed about and have the opportunity to participate in the regulatory processes as required by law. Open channels of communication must be maintained with Congress, other government agencies, licensees, and the public, as well as with the international nuclear community.

EFFICIENT. The American taxpayer, the rate-paying consumer, and licensees are all entitled to the best possible management and administration of regulatory activities. The highest technical and managerial competence is required, and must be a constant agency goal. NRC must establish means to evaluate and continually upgrade its regulatory capabilities. Regulatory activities should be consistent with the degree of risk reduction they achieve. Where several effective alternatives are available, the option which minimizes the use of resources should be adopted. Regulatory decisions should be made without undue delay.

CLEAR. Regulations should be coherent, logical, and practical. There should be a clear nexus between regulations and agency goals and objectives whether explicitly or implicitly stated. Agency positions should be readily understood and easily applied.

RELIABLE. Regulations should be based on the best available knowledge from research and operational experience. Systems interactions, technological uncertainties, and the diversity of licensees and regulatory activities must all be taken into account so that risks are maintained at an acceptably low level. Once established, regulation should be perceived to be reliable and not unjustifiably in a state of transition. Regulatory actions should always be fully consistent with written regulations and should be promptly, fairly, and decisively administered so as to lend stability to the nuclear operational and planning processes.

The effective regulation of users of nuclear materials requires constant vigilance and faithful adherence to these basic principles.