



NRC NEWS

Office of Public Affairs, Headquarters

Washington, DC. 20555-0001
www.nrc.gov ■ opa.resource@nrc.gov



No: 24-069
CONTACT: [David McIntyre](#), 301-415-8200

September 4, 2024

NRC Approves Amendments to Regulations for Licensing Research Reactors and Other Non-Power Production or Utilization Facilities

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has directed the agency staff to amend regulations for licensing “non-power production or utilization facilities,” also known as NPUFs, to make license renewal criteria more consistent with the limited risk such facilities pose to public safety.

A [final rule](#) approved today will eliminate license terms for research reactors and medical therapy facilities, meaning they will no longer need to apply for renewed licenses to continue operating. Instead, they will be required to update their final safety analysis reports every five years to maintain a current licensing basis. The NRC currently licenses 28 operating research reactors, mostly at universities, that fall into this category.

NPUFs that qualify as commercial or testing facilities will continue to have finite license terms. The final rule clarifies the license renewal process for these facilities. The NRC currently licenses one testing facility, at the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Gaithersburg, Maryland, and has issued a construction permit for a second, the Kairos Power Hermes test reactor in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. The agency has also issued a construction permit to SHINE Medical Technologies to build a commercial medical isotope production facility in Janesville, Wisconsin.

The final rule will also revise the definition of a testing facility. Currently, any NPUF capable of producing more than 10 megawatts of energy is considered a testing facility. This prescriptive criterion will change to a more risk-informed standard of an accident dose rate of greater than 1 Rem. (Accident dose rate reflects the dose a person at the facility boundary would be calculated to receive during a hypothetical worst-case accident.)

This final rule does not change the license renewal process for commercial nuclear power plants.

The rule will be published in the Federal Register once the staff incorporates edits directed by the Commission and will take effect 30 days after publication.