Nuclear Regulatory Commission (Nrc) Encyclopedia Article

Nuclear Regulatory Commission (Nrc)

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Nuclear Regulatory Commission (Nrc)

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) primary mission is to protect public health and safety and to protect the environment from the effects of radiation from nuclear reactors, materials, and waste facilities. The NRC is empowered by the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 and its amendments to regulate source material (primarily uranium ore and processed uranium), special nuclear material, including material enriched in plutonium or the isotope uranium-235 above certain levels, and by-product material, and to regulate the uses of these materials. Primarily, this means it regulates nuclear power plants and civilian research reactors, the materials used to make fuel for these plants, the wastes produced, and other materials and uses of radioactive material that are derived from these sources.

The NRC is headed by a five-member commission that is appointed by the president (subject to Senate confirmation). The NRC does not regulate naturally occurring radioactive materials (NORM) that do not fall into one of these categories. Such naturally occurring materials include radioactive waste from oil and gas production. The NRC also does not regulate radiation-producing machines, such as x-ray machines, or radioactive materials produced in accelerators.