

surveillance of the gauge. This proposed rule would more specifically address the current requirements in 10 CFR 20.1801 for security, and satisfy the requirements of 10 CFR 20.1802, which states that the licensee shall control and maintain constant surveillance of licensed material that is in a controlled or unrestricted area and that is not in storage. Control and constant surveillance is required when the gauge is not in storage, *e.g.*, is in use or undergoing maintenance. The NRC staff interprets "control and maintain constant surveillance" of portable gauges to mean being immediately present or remaining in close proximity to the portable gauge so as to be able to prevent unauthorized removal of the gauge.

Criminal Penalties

For the purpose of Section 223 of the Atomic Energy Act (AEA), the Commission is proposing to amend 10 CFR Part 30 under one or more of Sections 161b, 161i, or 161o of the AEA. Willful violations of the rule would be subject to criminal enforcement.

Agreement State Compatibility

Under the "Policy Statement on Adequacy and Compatibility of Agreement State Programs" approved by the Commission on June 30, 1997, and published in the **Federal Register** on September 3, 1997 (62 FR 46517), this proposed rule would be a matter of compatibility between the NRC and the Agreement States, thereby providing consistency among the Agreement State and NRC requirements. The NRC staff analyzed the proposed rule in accordance with the procedure established within Part III, "Categorization Process for NRC Program Elements," of Handbook 5.9 to Management Directive 5.9, "Adequacy and Compatibility of Agreement State Programs" (a copy of which may be viewed at <http://www.hsrdo.nrl.gov/nrc/home.html>). The NRC staff has determined that proposed 10 CFR 30.34(i) is classified as Compatibility Category "C." An Agreement State should adopt the essential objectives of the Compatibility Category "C" program elements to avoid conflict, duplication, gaps, or the conditions that would jeopardize an orderly pattern in the regulation of agreement material on a nationwide basis.

The NRC determined that the essential objective of proposed 10 CFR 30.34(i) is to reduce the opportunity for theft of a portable gauge by requiring a portable gauge licensee to provide a minimum of two independent physical controls that form tangible barriers to

secure portable gauges from unauthorized removal whenever portable gauges are not under the control and constant surveillance of the licensee.

The NRC believes that the proposed rule does not conflict with any existing State regulatory requirement. Personnel from Agreement States of Florida and Arkansas represented the Organization of Agreement States and participated as members of a working group along with NRC staff in the development of this proposed rule.

Plain Language

The Presidential Memorandum dated June 1, 1998, entitled "Plain Language in Government Writing," directed that the Government's writing be in plain language. This memorandum was published June 10, 1998 (63 FR 31883). The NRC requests comments on this proposed rule specifically with respect to the clarity and effectiveness of the language used. Comments should be sent to the address listed under the heading **ADDRESSES** above.

Voluntary Consensus Standards

The National Technology Transfer Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-113), requires that Federal agencies use technical standards that are developed or adopted by voluntary consensus standards bodies unless the use of such a standard is inconsistent with applicable law or otherwise impractical. In this proposed rule, the NRC would revise 10 CFR part 30 to add certain requirements for the security of portable gauges containing byproduct material. This action does not constitute the establishment of a standard that contains generally applicable requirements.

Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Environmental Impact

The Commission has determined under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, and the NRC's regulations in Subpart A of 10 CFR part 51, that this proposed rule, if adopted, would not be a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment; therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required. The Commission has concluded on the basis of an environmental assessment that these requirements would not have any effects on the environment in which portable gauges are currently regulated under 10 CFR part 30. The proposed rule would increase requirements to prevent the theft of portable gauges containing byproduct material.

The determination of this environmental assessment is that there

will be no significant impact on the public from this action. However, the general public should note that the NRC is seeking public participation. Comments on any aspect of this environmental assessment may be submitted to the NRC as indicated under the **ADDRESSES** heading.

The NRC has sent a copy of the environmental assessment and this proposed rule to every State Liaison Officer and requested their comments on the environmental assessment. The environmental assessment may also be examined at the NRC Public Document Room, Public File Area O1F21, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland. Single copies of the environmental assessment are available from Lydia Chang, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, telephone (301) 415-6319, e-mail lwc1@nrc.gov.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

This proposed rule does not contain new or amended information collection requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*). Existing requirements were approved by the Office of Management and Budget, approval number 3150-0017.

Public Protection Notification

The NRC may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a request for information or an information collection requirement unless the requesting document displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Regulatory Analysis

The Commission has prepared a draft regulatory analysis on this proposed regulation. The analysis examines the costs and benefits of various alternatives. In addition to the proposed regulation, the NRC staff also considered alternatives such as: prohibiting unattended storage of portable gauges in or on vehicles; prohibiting unattended storage at locations other than licensed facilities; or requiring use of a metal enclosure and a lock with a shielded/protected shackle. However, these alternatives were found to be overly prescriptive and excessively burdensome for most NRC licensees. The option selected is requiring a minimum of two independent physical controls whenever the portable gauge is not under the control and constant surveillance of the licensee. This proposed rule would enhance the current level of security and control (*e.g.*, the requirements in 10 CFR