



Canadian Nuclear
Safety Commission

Commission canadienne
de sûreté nucléaire

REGULATORY GUIDE

Licensee Public Information Programs

G-217

January 2004

REGULATORY DOCUMENTS

The legal framework within which the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) operates includes the *Nuclear Safety and Control Act*, its Regulations and other legal instruments such as licences, certificates and orders. The legal framework is supported by regulatory documents issued by the CNSC, the main classes of which are:

Regulatory Policy (P): a document that describes the philosophy, principles or fundamental factors that underlie the CNSC's approach to its regulatory mission. It provides direction to CNSC staff and information to stakeholders.

Regulatory Standard (S): a document that describes CNSC requirements. It imposes obligations on the regulated party, once it is referenced in a licence or other legally enforceable instrument.

Regulatory Guide (G): a document that indicates acceptable ways of meeting CNSC requirements, as expressed in the Act, Regulations, regulatory standard or other legally-enforceable instrument. It provides guidance to licensees and other stakeholders.

Regulatory Notice (N): a document that provides licensees and other stakeholders with information about significant matters that warrant timely action.

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LICENSEE PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAMS

1.0 PURPOSE

This regulatory guide is intended to help certain Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) licensees and licence applicants to document their public information programs in a manner that will satisfy the applicable CNSC regulations. The guide is also intended to help CNSC staff assess that documentation when it is submitted with an application for a new CNSC licence, or for a licence renewal.

2.0 SCOPE

This guide provides general information on the regulatory requirements for public information programs for Class I nuclear facilities, Class II nuclear facilities, and uranium mines and mills. It explains how the review of a public information program fits into the overall licensing process, and defines CNSC expectations for the public information program documentation that is submitted with licence applications and licence renewals.

Licence applicants should confirm with the CNSC whether public information program documentation is required, and when it should be submitted for a given application.

3.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

A public information program is a regulatory requirement for licence applicants and licensed operators of Class I nuclear facilities, Class II nuclear facilities, and uranium mines and mills. The requirements for public information programs are stated in the regulations as follows:

- 1) Paragraph 3(j) of the *Class I Nuclear Facilities Regulations*, "...the proposed program to inform persons living in the vicinity of the site of the general nature and characteristics of the anticipated effects on the environment and the health and safety of persons that may result from the activity to be licensed."
- 2) Paragraph 3(r) of the *Class II Nuclear Facilities and Prescribed Equipment Regulations*, "...the program to inform persons living in the vicinity of the site of the general nature and characteristics of the anticipated effects on the environment and the health and safety of persons that may result from the nuclear facility."
- 3) Sub-paragraph 3(c)(i) and paragraph 8(a) of the *Uranium Mines and Mills Regulations*, "...the program to inform persons living in the vicinity of the mine or mill of the general nature and characteristics of the anticipated effects of the activity to be licensed on the environment and the health and safety of persons," and "...the program to inform persons living in the vicinity of the site of the mine or mill of the general nature and characteristics of the anticipated effects of the abandonment on the environment and the health and safety of persons."

4.0 CONTEXT WITHIN THE LICENCING PROCESS

Where applicable, the CNSC licensing process includes review of documentation that describes the applicant's public information program.

4.1. The CNSC Licensing Process

The CNSC typically applies a phased process to its licensing of new nuclear facilities and activities. The *NSCA* and associated regulations require that licence applicants provide certain information at each licensing stage (e.g., site preparation, construction, operation, shutdown, restart, etc.). The type and level of detail of this information varies depending on the licensing stage, the degree of risk involved, and the specific circumstances.

At all licensing stages and for licence renewals, applications may incorporate new or previously submitted information in accordance with legislated requirements, and in the best judgment of the applicant. The applicant can submit this information directly or by reference, and information submitted at one stage of the licensing process can become a building block for the next stage. For example, information submitted for an environmental assessment early in the licensing process may provide one of the primary building blocks for establishing the public information program documentation that will be required at a later stage.

The CNSC reviews each licence application upon receipt to determine whether the applicant is qualified to carry out the proposed activity and has made adequate provision for protection of the environment and the health and safety of persons, and maintenance of the national security measures required to support the international obligations to which Canada has agreed.

If satisfied that the applicant has fulfilled all application requirements, the CNSC, or an officer designated by the CNSC, may approve the proposed activity by taking the appropriate licensing action. The licence will refer to the applicant's undertakings, and will contain any conditions that the CNSC considers necessary.

4.2. Review of Public Information Programs

Review of licence applications includes consideration of all documentation pertaining to the applicant's public information program. CNSC staff incorporates their review findings in a *Commission Member Document (CMD)*, entitled "Information and Recommendations of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission Staff." Commission members then review this document, along with submissions made by interveners and the information provided by the applicant, prior to a public hearing. During the public hearing, Commission members may ask questions about the applicant's public information program.

5.0 PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAMS

5.1. Overview

The CNSC recognizes that public information programs vary widely to meet the specific needs of the public in relation to the different types of facilities. In addition, the CNSC acknowledges that the public information program for a specific facility should fit within the context of the applicant's overall corporate public information or community relations, public relations, communications, or marketing programs. Therefore, a description of the applicant's corporate initiatives in these areas may meet some or all of the public information program requirements for a given licence application. In addition, the applicant may identify the public information program documented during one stage of the licensing process as an intended building block from which the program will evolve during subsequent stages.

For some facilities, the existing corporate public information program may be extensive and ongoing, and may include goals and objectives beyond those that address the regulatory requirements; other facilities may need a less extensive and informal public information program. The primary goal is to ensure that environmental and health and safety issues that may arise as a result of the facility entering a new licensing phase are effectively communicated to the public, in a manner that complies with established regulations.

5.2. Elements of Program Documentation

The proposed public information program should be documented for submission with the licence application. In order for the CNSC to make a full evaluation, this documentation should incorporate the following elements of the program:

- 1) Objectives,
- 2) Target Audience,
- 3) Public and Media Opinion,
- 4) Public Information Program,
- 5) Program Evaluation Process, and
- 6) Contact Information

These elements should contain specific information about the public information program, as described below.

5.2.1. Objectives

State the objectives of the public information program in broad terms. Objectives should be measurable, and are often best explained within the context of an overall corporate objective. For example, a corporate vision, mandate, or mission statement, or a specific communications policy, may help describe the objectives of the public information program.

5.2.2. Target Audience

Clearly define the target audiences for the public information program. Target audiences include the general population of the local community, key opinion and political leaders, community and media groups, interveners, and any other interested stakeholders. The size and variety of these groups depends on the type and location of the licensed facility, and the geographic vicinity of the of the community population.

While those persons who live in close proximity to a nuclear facility usually comprise the primary target audience, the CNSC encourages licence applicants to employ a broad and inclusive interpretation of “persons living in the vicinity” to ensure that the information reaches all interested parties. For example, faculty members and students living and working on a campus where there is a research reactor, while not permanent residents of the community, would be a potential audience for information about the anticipated effects of a licensed activity.

5.2.3. Public and Media Opinion

Clearly identify community and public views, opinions, and concerns, with descriptions of media coverage related to the licence application or facility. Because the media represents and influences public opinion, this description should include how much media coverage there has been, which mediums have been involved, and what issues have been covered. In addition, this section should describe the issues that have been covered and the support or concern that has been expressed with relation to the licence application or facility.

5.2.4. Public Information Program

A description of the overall information program should be summarized in the following terms:

- 1) The information products that will be developed, and the status of their development;
- 2) Samples of information products (if available);
- 3) The methods used to distribute the information;
- 4) How the information will address the anticipated effects of the licensed activity on the environment;
- 5) How the information will addresses the anticipated effects of the licensed activity on health and safety;
- 6) How specific target audiences will be reached;
- 7) How the applicant will respond to comments, questions, or concerns expressed by the target audiences.

Licence applicants are encouraged to employ multiple communication approaches to enhance public understanding of the information.

5.2.5. Program Evaluation Process

Describe the proposed method and timelines for evaluating the success of the public information program in meeting the stated objectives.

5.2.6. Contact Information

Provide contact information for the person responsible for the public information program.

REFERENCES

1. Canada, *General Nuclear Safety and Control Regulations*, SOR/2000–202.
2. Canada, *Class I Nuclear Facilities Regulations*, SOR/2000–204.
3. Canada, *Class II Nuclear Facilities and Prescribed Equipment Regulations*, SOR/2000–205.
4. Canada, *Uranium Mines and Mills Regulations*, SOR/2000–206.
5. Canada, *Nuclear Safety and Control Act*, R.S.C. 1997, c. 1-10.

APPENDIX

Outline for Submissions

The following outline is intended to assist licence applicants in documenting their public information programs for submission to the CNSC:

1. Objectives
2. Target Audiences
3. Public and Media Opinion
4. Public Information Program
 - (a) The information products that will be developed, and the status of their development;
 - (b) Samples of information products (if available);
 - (c) The methods used to distribute the information;
 - (d) How the information will address the anticipated effects of the licensed activity on the environment;
 - (e) How the information will address the anticipated effects of the licensed activity on health and safety;
 - (f) How specific target audiences will be reached;
 - (g) How the applicant will respond to comments, questions, or concerns expressed by the target audiences.
5. Program Evaluation
6. Contact Information