

Evaluation Of Guidelines For Exposures To Technologically Enhanced Naturally Occurring Radioactive M

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Basic Approaches to Regulating Radiation Exposures of the Public

This chapter presents a general discussion of basic approaches to regulating exposures of the public to radionuclides in the environment. These approaches are applied without regard for whether the radionuclides of concern are naturally occurring or human-made. The primary purpose of this discussion is to provide information that would be useful in understanding the many guidances and regulations regarding radionuclides in the environment discussed in chapters 7-10. The guidances and regulations cited here as examples are discussed in more detail in chapter 7.

The fundamental purpose of any standard for radionuclides in the environment is to limit health risks to exposed individuals and populations. Many standards for controlling radiation exposures of the public have been developed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other federal agencies with responsibilities in radiation protection of the public, including the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Department of Energy. Furthermore, the EPA's guidances and regulations have been developed under the authority of various environmental laws that mandate different approaches to health protection of the public (Overy and Richardson 1995). Nonetheless, any standard is based on considerations of one of the following factors for the particular exposure situations of concern:

- Judgments about whether particular magnitudes of health risk to the public are *acceptable*.
- Judgments about whether particular magnitudes of health risk to the public are *achievable*.

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