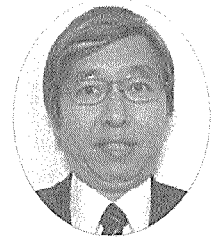


Current Status on Radiation Protection Policy in Japan



Dr. Hidenori Yonehara

Team Leader,
Radon Research Group,
National Institute of
Radiological Sciences (NIRS)

The legislative system for radiation safety regulation in Japan consists of two different systems. Radioactive sources and radiation generators are subject to regulation by “The Law concerning Prevention of Radiation Hazards due to Radioisotopes, etc.” Reactors and the materials containing uranium, thorium or plutonium are excluded from the scope of the law system. Reactors and the materials are regulated by “the Law concerning control on nuclear material, nuclear fuel and reactors”. The discussions for introduction of new standards for radiation protection are carried out in the Radiation Council.

From the results of long-term discussion for the adoption of concepts proposed in the ICRP Publication 60,

the Radiation Council published report which recommend introduction of new definition “Effective dose”, “Equivalent Dose”, and revised dose limit for occupational exposure into the law system in June 1998. The law system was revised according to the report in October 2000 and revised law was enforced in 2001.

The Council continued the discussion for introducing the concepts of exemption and exclusion proposed in the publication 60 and summarized the report which recommend regulatory bodies to introduce the exemption level provided in the IAEA International Basic Safety Standards (BSS) into the law systems. The significant revision of “The Law concerning Prevention of Radiation Hazards due to Radioisotopes, etc.” was carried out and revised ordinances

under the law were enforced in 2005. Various types of instruments including a radiation source, such as a smoke detector or a small check radiation source, which are currently not regulated in the current system would be subject to regulation under the new system. To avoid confusion and to ensure a smooth transition among the general users, a new design approval system has been adopted for the regulation.

The clearance level for radioactive waste released from nuclear facilities had been discussed in committee meetings of the Nuclear Safety Commission (NSC) of Japan. The NSC had provided the clearance levels for Japanese nuclear facilities calculated using exposure scenarios and parameters which are suitable to specific Japanese conditions. Recently NSC revised the values calculated in NRC so far using the condition based on latest information used for the derivation of values used in IAEA safety guide RS-G-1.7 published in 2004. Compared with revised clearance levels and values in RS-G-1.7, no significant difference was found between the values. NSC concluded that the set of values provided in RS-G-1.7 is appropriate for the clearance level in Japanese regulation system considering importance

of international unified standard. The regulatory bodies have revised the law system to introduce the concepts of clearance and the values proposed in RS-G-1.7 as the clearance level in 2005. Clearance for the waste from facilities radioactive materials for the purpose of general industrial, research or medical use is now under discussion.

Regulation of NORM (naturally occurring radioactive materials) become a significant issue on radiation protection. NORM which activity concentration is less than 370 Bq/g is not subject to practical regulation in the current Japanese law system. The General Administrative Group set up under the Radiation Council submitted the report in October 2003. The report showed the results of investigation on status of actual use of NORM in Japan and basic direction for policy of the regulation. Taking into account the difficulty of regulation, various kinds of NORM were classified into 8 categories according to artificiality or controllability. The Group concluded that adequate regulation methods and exemption criteria for each categories should be necessary. The exemption criteria based on the radiation dose instead of the concentration were determined in accordance with their characteristics. 