IAEA
International Atomic Energy Agency

Factsheet for Decision Makers

Radiation Protection of the Public

EXEMPTION AND CLEARANCE

Why is it important?

One of the important principles underpinning the IAEA Safety Standards is the use of a graded approach in regulation. Some uses of radiation have such a low level of risk that they can be exempted from regulatory control. In some cases, regulatory control over certain radiation material or radioactive objects is no longer necessary; this is called clearance.

What do I need to know?

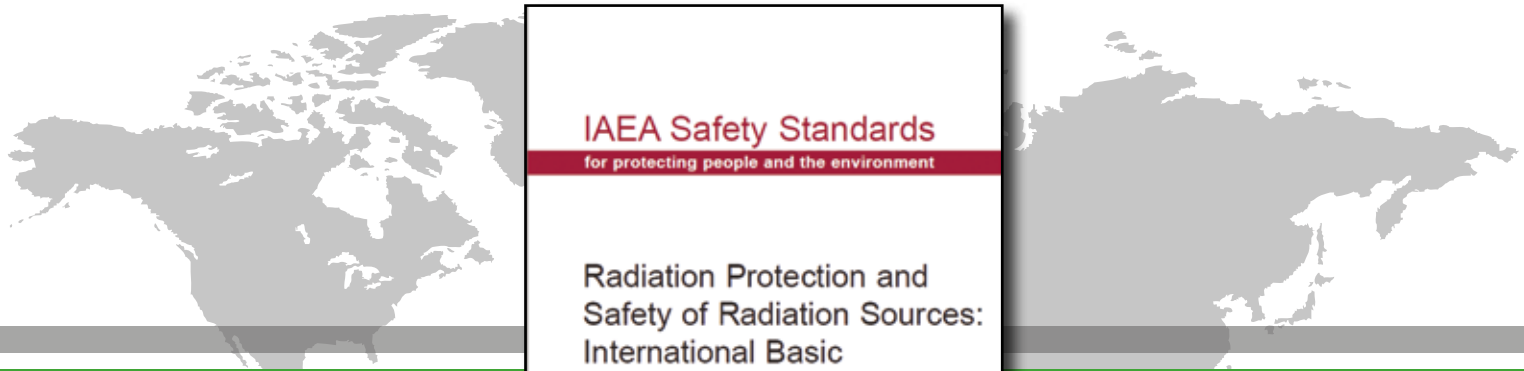
The stringency of control measures applied by the regulatory body need to be commensurate with the level of risk associated with a particular use of radiation.

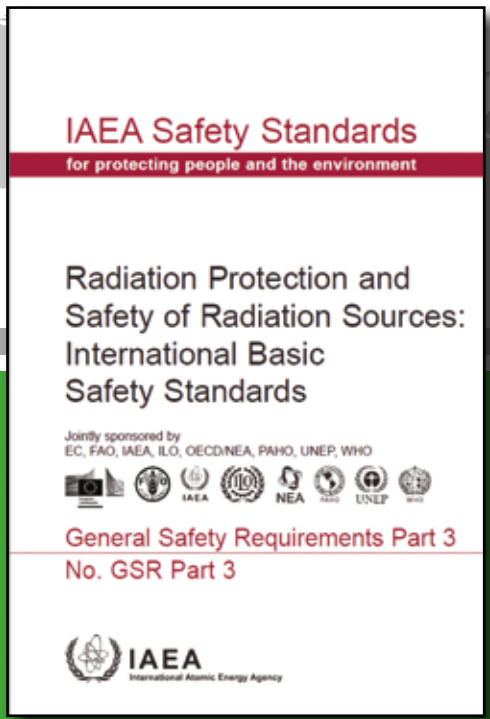
The general criteria of exemption and clearance are:

- Radiation risks are sufficiently low as to not warrant regulatory control; ***or***
- Regulatory control of the practice or the source would produce no net benefit, i.e. no reasonable control measures would achieve a worthwhile return in terms of reduction of individual doses or of health risks

These criteria are considered to be met if, in all reasonably foreseeable circumstances, the individual dose is 10 μSv in a year or less or, for low probability scenarios, the dose does not exceed 1 mSv in a year. This can be demonstrated through a safety assessment.

In the case of naturally occurring radioactive material, the dose criterion for exemption and clearance is 1 mSv in a year. Exemptions may also be applied on the basis of a generic or "type" approval by the regulatory body.

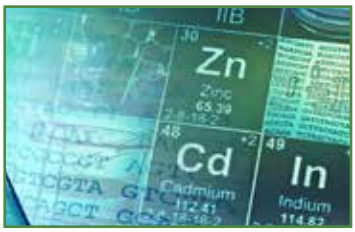




The International Basic Safety Standards (BSS) are the international benchmark for radiation safety. The BSS are used in many countries as the basis for national legislation to protect workers, patients, the public and the environment from the risks of ionizing radiation.

The BSS are based on the most recent scientific evidence on the effects of ionizing radiation and take into account practices and experiences from around the world in the use of ionizing radiation and nuclear techniques. Eight international organizations sponsor the BSS.

What actions are required?



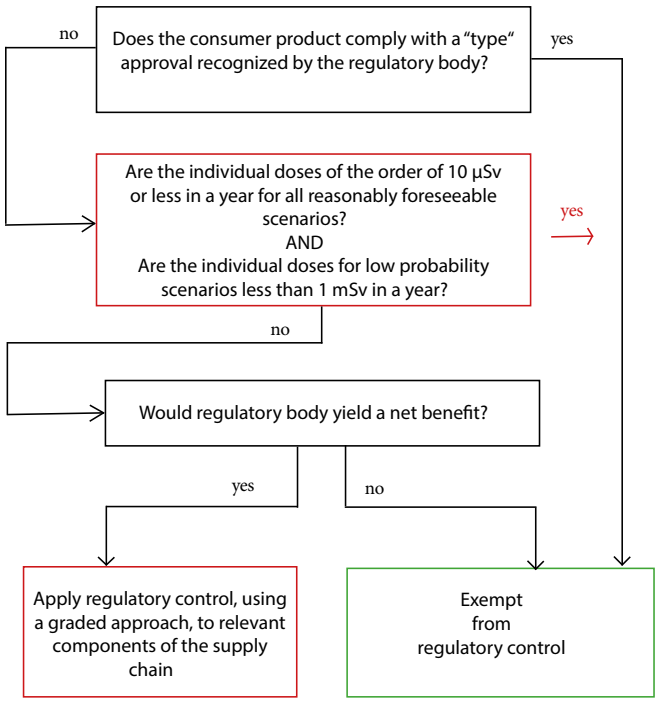
The regulatory body needs to apply the criteria for exemption and clearance as published in the BSS.

If the activity concentrations are not exceeded, then exemption and clearance apply without further consideration.

If these values are exceeded, a safety assessment that considers all realistic exposure scenarios may show that the dose criteria are still met.

Even if the dose criteria are not met, the regulatory body may still decide that regulatory control is not necessary as it would bring no net benefit.

SAFETY ASSESSMENT FOR CONSUMER PRODUCTS.



Resources

Radiation Protection and Safety of Radiation Sources: International Basic Safety Standards, No. GSR Part 3
http://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/publications/PDF/Pub1578_web-57265295.pdf

Exemption from Regulatory Control of Goods Containing Small Amounts of Radioactive Material
http://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/publications/PDF/TE_1679_web.pdf

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