Committee on Radiation Protection and Public Health (CRPPH)

The use of radiation has contributed greatly to the advancement and enhancement of the quality of life and the human endeavour. Radiation has been applied with beneficial results in medicine, industry and energy production. Governments provide regulatory programmes to ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place to protect workers, the public, and the environment from the harmful effects of the inappropriate use or handling of radiation sources. These programmes are founded on a thorough understanding of radiation risks, including how these risks are assessed and managed in their societal context. Radiation protection is a cross cutting discipline that establishes programmes for the protection of workers, the public, and the environment from the possible hazards of ionising radiation. Within the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA), the Committee on Radiation Protection and Public Health (CRPPH) is responsible for studying these issues and supporting national authorities in the adoption and maintenance of high standards of protection in the use of ionising radiation.

Historical context

In July 1957, the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) established the Health and Safety Sub-Committee, which was charged with the implementation of a radiation protection programme. Following the establishment of the European Nuclear Energy Agency in 1958, the Sub-Committee was attached to the Steering Committee for Nuclear Energy. In 1973 the mandate of the Sub-Committee was revised, establishing the Committee on Radiation Protection and Public Health (CRPPH). The CRPPH's mandate was updated in 1981 and again in 1993 to provide more specific objectives, and to better reflect the Committee's relationship with the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP). Other refinements in 1993 reflected the Committee's joint international project co-ordination work in such areas as occupational exposure (the ISOE programme) and nuclear emergency exercises (the INEX programme). The OECD Council approved the current CRPPH Mandate in October 2000. This latest revision brought the Committee's mandate into line with the NEA's 1999 Strategic Plan.

Goals

Under this new mandate, the CRPPH is responsible for radiation protection studies and experience exchanges given the following goals:

- to provide its Members with a high-level, visible forum for exchange and discussion;
- to seek common understanding of identified issues;
- to advance the "state-of-the-art" in radiation protection theory and practice;
- to advance policies that bring the system of radiation protection more in line with modern societal needs, and;
- to promote international co-operative projects.

The CRPPH aims to establish a work environment free of known hazards for nuclear power and waste management operations, as well as for medical and other industrial uses of ionising radiation. More than simply to protect workers and the public from the hazards of radiation, a key objective of the CRPPH is to facilitate the peaceful uses of radiation that can improve living

standards. This is accomplished, in part, through the application of the ALARA* principle to effectively manage public and worker exposures. The work of the CRPPH has always been divided into two broad areas: conceptual and policy issues, and operational radiation protection topics.

Co-operation with other organisations

The CRPPH performs this work in close collaboration with other international organisations. These include the following:

- International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
- European Commission (EC)
- International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP)
- World Health Organisation (WHO)
- World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)
- United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UN-OCHA)

CRPPH members

An internationally recognised committee of radiation protection experts carries out the work. The CRPPH is also promotes international co-operation for more efficient and cost-effective discussion of important radiation protection issues. Within the NEA, this work has contributed significantly to maintaining the appropriate balance amongst all the necessary elements for a rational discussion of the regulation and research associated with nuclear power.

* 'As low as reasonably achievable'