INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

ISO 1709

Third edition
2018-02

Nuclear energy — Fissile materials — Principles of criticality safety in storing, handling and processing

Énergie nucléaire — Matières fissiles — Principes de sûreté-criticité lors des opérations d'entreposage, de manutention et de mise en oeuvre du procédé

Reference number
ISO 1709:2018(E)

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Published in Switzerland

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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For an explanation on the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 85, *Nuclear energy, nuclear technologies and radiological protection*, Subcommittee SC 5, *Nuclear installations, processes and technologies*.

This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition (ISO 1709:1995), which has been technically revised.

A list of all parts in the ISO 1709 series can be found on the ISO website.

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Nuclear energy — Fissile materials — Principles of criticality safety in storing, handling and processing

1 Scope

This document specifies the basic principles and limitations which govern operations with fissile materials. It discusses general nuclear criticality safety criteria for equipment design and for the development of operating controls, while providing guidance for the assessment of procedures, equipment, and operations. It does not cover specific quality assurance requirements or details of equipment or operational procedures.

This document does not deal with the issues associated with administrative criteria relating to nuclear criticality safety. These issues are covered by ISO 14943. It does not cover the effects of radiation on man or materials, unless the material properties affect nuclear criticality safety.

These criteria apply to operations with fissile materials outside nuclear reactors but within the boundaries of nuclear establishments. They are concerned with the limitations which are imposed on operations because of the properties of these materials which permit them to support nuclear chain reactions. These principles apply to quantities of fissile nuclides in which nuclear criticality safety is required to be established.

This document can also be applied to the transport of fissile materials outside the boundaries of nuclear establishments.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 7753, *Nuclear energy — Performance and testing requirements for criticality detection and alarm systems*

ISO 11320, *Nuclear criticality safety — Emergency preparedness and response*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at https://www.iso.org/obp

— IEC Electropedia: available at http://www.electropedia.org/

3.1
critical
having an effective neutron multiplication factor equal to unity

3.2
double batching
unintended increase in the quantity of a material that is controlled for Nuclear Criticality Safety such that twice the intended quantity is present

Note 1 to entry: This typically applies to processes involving discrete quantities of material.

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3.3
fissile material
material, other than natural or depleted uranium, that is capable of sustaining a thermal neutron chain reaction

3.4
fissile nuclide
nuclide capable of undergoing fission by interaction with neutrons of any energy

3.5
credible abnormal conditions
identified faults and/or circumstances outside of the normal envelope of operations that may lead to an unsafe situation

3.6
neutron absorber
material with which neutrons interact significantly by reactions resulting in their disappearance as free particles

3.7
neutron leakage
neutrons leaving a fissile system boundary such that they no longer interact with that system

Note 1 to entry: For an array of fissile units, neutron leakage from one unit may or may not interact with other units.

3.8
nuclear chain reaction
series of nuclear reactions in which one of the agents necessary to the series is itself produced by the same reactions

3.9
nuclear criticality accident
release of energy as a result of inadvertently producing a self-sustaining or divergent nuclear chain reaction

3.10
nuclear criticality safety
protection against the consequences of a nuclear criticality accident, preferably by prevention of the accident and responses to such accidents should they occur

3.11
nuclear criticality risk assessment
technically reviewed analysis that establishes the technical bases, limits, and controls for the nuclear criticality safety of a given operation

3.12
defence-in-depth
hierarchical deployment of different levels of diverse equipment and procedures (known as barriers) to prevent the escalation of faults to a hazardous condition

[SOURCE: IAEA *Safety Glossary* 2007 Edition, modified — The definition has been modified.]

3.13
over batching
unintended increase in the quantity of a material that is controlled for Nuclear Criticality Safety such that one or more extra discrete quantities are present

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3.14
criticality safety control
mechanism which provides a high level of assurance that the probability of occurrence of a critical excursion is acceptably low

Note 1 to entry: An engineered feature (active or passive) or administrative requirement that establishes constraints on the range of values that process parameters can assume with a given reliability (i.e. failure frequency), thereby, providing a barrier to a criticality accident.

4 Procedures

4.1 General

The early recognition of the special hazards associated with fissile materials has led to the application of formal control practices based on principles of nuclear criticality safety. Diligent and conscientious application of these principles has produced an accident record which compares favourably with common industrial accidents. Continuation and improvement of this generally favourable record should have the cooperation of all those involved in operations.

4.2 Responsibility

Operational responsibility for nuclear criticality safety shall be clearly defined and shall belong to operations management throughout the normal chain of command.

4.3 Equipment design

Safety shall, to a practicable extent, be taken into account when designing operating equipment, for example, by restrictions on vessel geometry. The early incorporation of nuclear criticality safety considerations into plant and equipment design provides economic benefits. Process and equipment design identified as important for nuclear criticality safety may require approval by the appropriate nuclear criticality safety authority.

4.4 Criticality assessment

4.4.1 A nuclear criticality safety assessment is required for all operations and facilities under the Scope unless it can be shown it is not required through reasons of quantity and/or form of fissile material. Such reasoning shall include consideration of all credible abnormal conditions. The reasoning may be based on comparison with established criteria (for example safely subcritical mass or enrichment of fissile material).

4.4.2 The nuclear criticality safety assessment shall consider all normal and credible abnormal conditions. Process management shall assist in determining such abnormal conditions. The process shall be required to remain subcritical with an appropriate margin under such conditions, but it should be recognized that additional assessment may be required before attempting to recover from the abnormal condition.

4.5 Written procedures

Written procedures shall govern all operations involving fissile material in excess of those threshold quantities requiring nuclear criticality safety assessment. Copies of applicable written procedures should be posted up or available in operating areas.

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