

France

Nuclear regulatory authority

The Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and the Sea (MEEDDM):

- defines general policy on energy issues, including nuclear.
- defines general regulations and takes individual decisions applicable to nuclear facilities; participates to the elaboration of the national policy regarding the management of radioactive waste and spent fuel.

The Autorité de sûreté nucléaire (ASN) is an independent administrative authority. Set up by law 2006-686 of 13 June 2006 concerning nuclear transparency and safety, ASN is tasked, on behalf of the State, with regulating nuclear safety and radiation protection.

Its core duty :

- Regulations: ASN contributes to drafting of regulations, by giving the Government its opinion on draft decrees and ministerial orders, or by issuing technical regulatory decisions. ASN also makes the individual decisions stipulated in the Public Health Code.
- Inspection: ASN checks compliance with the rules and specifications applicable to the installations and activities within its field of competence. Inspection is one of the primary means of verification available to ASN, which also has appropriate powers of enforcement and punishment.
- Information: ASN informs the public and other stakeholders (local information committees, environmental protection associations, etc), about its activities and the state of nuclear safety and radiation protection in France. In the event of an emergency, ASN assists the Government. It sends the competent authorities its recommendations regarding the civil protection measures to be taken.

Nuclear activities

Nuclear and radiation protection activities regulated by the ASN include : 58 PWRs in operation, one under construction, 11 research reactors, a complete set of fuel-cycle plants, waste-storage / disposal facilities, dismantling activities, medical units (roughly 50,000), sealed radioactive sources (roughly 38,000) and transportation of radioactive material.

Radioactive waste and spent fuel management

French policy for radioactive waste and spent fuel management is based on three pillars: the establishment of a national plan for the management of radioactive materials and waste (published every 3 year), transparency, and securing the financing for radioactive waste management. Besides, the disposal of foreign radioactive waste is forbidden by law.

Radioactive waste are disposed by Andra, that currently operates 3 disposal centers (1 for VLLW, 2 for LLW-SL including 1 closed), and one underground laboratory in Bure. Andra is conducting R&D for future disposal centers. Andra also publishes every 3 year an inventory of radioactive materials and waste.

ASN is in charge of the control of the safety of storage and disposal facilities.

Main legal instruments

The main legal instruments on these issues are : Act No. 2006-686 of 13 June 2006 on Transparency and Security in the Nuclear Field ; Code of Environment (Article L. 124-1 ?) ; Act No. 78-753 of 17 July 1978 on the relationships between the administration and the public.

In the field of radioactive waste and spent fuel management, the Act No 2006-739 of 28 June 2006 provides for the publication every 3 year of a National Plan for the Management of Radioactive Materials and Waste (last update in 2012), and for the publication every 3 year of an inventory of radioactive materials and waste present in France (last update in 2012).

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