

ALARA Center promotes good practice in the USA

The ALARA Center planned for Korea will be based on a similar centre that has been running successfully in the USA for more than 10 years. The US Center is run from the Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) in Long Island, New York State.

The BNL ALARA Center was set up in 1983 at the request of the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission, to comply with a directive from the US Congress that the NRC oversee the radiation safety of workers at NRC-licensed facilities. The ALARA Centre collates and distributes information on good ALARA practices. Its functions are to:

- Provide technical support on policy, regulation, guidance and standards.
- Monitor efforts to reduce occupational exposure at nuclear facilities in the US and abroad.
- Evaluate research on dose reduction and ALARA.
- Inform the Nuclear Regulatory

Commission and the Department of Energy of promising research and development related to ALARA.

- Focus the attention of industry and government contractors on ALARA and keep them informed about promising dose-reduction efforts.
- Act as a centre where information related to ALARA can be deposited, circulated and retrieved by the nuclear industry.
- Examine areas where international collaboration may be valuable.

The Center gives advice on ALARA-related matters to the NRC and DoE, as well as other nuclear utilities and organisations. This can include organising training courses, analysing and advising on individual ALARA programmes, and reviewing designs or modifications to nuclear facilities. The Center is frequently a focus for US contacts with ALARA or radiation protection groups working overseas.

DISSEMINATING INFORMATION

The Brookhaven ALARA Centre maintains a number of databases, which have information on: contacts knowledgeable about radiological safety; bibliographies of publications on radiation protection and ALARA; radiation exposure data; notes on

new publications significant to ALARA professionals; and good practice documents on implementing ALARA.

The information collected at the Center is passed on in two ways: a newsletter called *ALARA Notes* is published at intervals and distributed to around 2000 individuals with an interest in ALARA; and on-line access is available, either through a PC and modem or via a "faxback" service known as the ALARA Center Exchange Interactive Fax Retrieval System, or ACEFAX.

ACEFAX is probably the most widely used of the ALARA Centre's services, and it provided abstracts of documents to over 2000 callers, many from overseas, in the last eight months of 1994. Its success can be ascribed to its ease of use — a fax machine is all that the receiver requires.

Callers can obtain information from any of eight databases: general documents; health physics; jobs; research; workshop proceedings; news; processes; and practices. Each document is coded by number, and there are a complete index of documents (now 24 pages long) and an index for each database. Interested parties call using the handset of their fax machine, and hear recorded instructions; up to five documents can be obtained during each call by keying the numbers of the documents.

Nuclear Engineering International

For more details on the Brookhaven ALARA Centre and the ACEFAX service contact Tas Khan or James Xie, ALARA Centre, Brookhaven National Laboratory, PO Box 5000, Upton, New York 11973-5000, USA. The number of the ACEFAX service is +1 516 282 7361.