35.2 ACEFAX - Obtaining Information through fax

Introduction

The BNL ALARA Center operates an on-line service which provides users the convenience of faxing the most up-to-date information on ALARA related topics to themselves. This service is based on the ACEFAX system (ACEFAX stands for ALARA Center Exchange Fax Retrieval System). The user is required to select the number of a document from the document list, go to his fax machine, lift up the hand set and dial the ACEFAX number. A friendly voice prompts him to punch in the document number on the fax machine's numerical buttons and press a particular key. The document is then faxed to him. This simple system has proven so popular that several thousand documents have been retrieved from the system in the last year. The simple three-step procedure is given in the following section. We reorganized and upgraded the system. In doing so we have added a great deal of new material and at the same time made searches for pertinent information more simple and less time consuming. In this section we acquaint our readers with the reorganization. We explain the subject matter of the various data bases into which the system has been split and how best to search these databases for the most relevant and up-to-date information. We have also included on ACEFAX the entire proceedings of the NRC/BNL sponsored Third International Workshop on Implementation of ALARA at Nuclear Power Plants. This should prove to be a very valuable source of new information on ALARA in the many different areas of relevance.

Organization of ACEFAX

The information contained on ACEFAX has been split into eight databases. Each database has its own flavor and meets the need of specific types of users. We shall begin by describing what kind of information each of the databases contains:

GENERAL	Document lists and subject indices for each database. Also contains documents of general interest.
PROCESSES	*Historical* information on engineering and scientific techniques to reduce dose.
PRACTICES	Administrative practices and management techniques to reduce dose.
JOBS	Lessons learnt from high dose jobs at nuclear power plants.
HEALTH PHYSICS	Applied efforts at nuclear power plants to reduce doses.
RESEARCH	Latest research findings on ways of reducing occupational doses.
NEWS	Current events, news announcements, summarized material from journals, newsletters. This database is largely the source of our newsletter *ALARA Notes*.
PROCEEDINGS	Proceedings of the Third International Workshop on Implementation of ALARA at Nuclear Power Plants.

The documents in most of these databases are 1 or 2 pages long, in a pleasant looking format, designed to capture the main points and conclusions of the work. References, and in many cases contacts, are provided for further information. A few documents, of necessity, are many pages long. The papers from the proceedings, for example, are complete and include the discussion that followed.

Document lists and subject indices for the databases

Each document in a database has been given a distinct number to access it. Each database has a separate document list of only a few pages. All the databases have been provided with subject indices. With the use of the subject index and the document list, each database may be quickly searched for the most up-to-date and relevant information. It may be noted that, since we number documents in each database serially, the most up-to-date documents have the highest numbers. If, however, one wants the complete document list, comprising all the databases, one can request document number 12 from the ACEFAX system. Document 12 contains the complete list.

The numbering system used for ACEFAX

The numbering of the documents is as follows:

1	to	99	General documents
100	to	499	Health Physics database
500	to	999	Jobs database
1000	to	1999	Research database
2000	to	2500	Workshop proceedings
3000	to	4000	News database
6000	to	6499	Processes database
6500	to	6999	Practices database

Calling ACEFAX

The procedure for calling ACEFAX is very simple. The three steps are described in the next section. It is essential to call only from fax machines and not from computers with fax cards. It is also important to use the handset to make the call. ACEFAX will respond with a voice greeting and prompt you to take certain simple actions. Users are advised to follow the prompts carefully the first few times. Basically the user enters the number of the document of interest and ACEFAX will fax the document to him. One can ask for a total of five documents on a single call but we recommend starting by requesting one document only on the first call. Document number 12, which contains the complete list of documents on ACEFAX, is already 24 pages long and growing. It is therefore suggested the the separate document list for each database be used instead.

Two separate procedures are described to access ACEFAX in the next section. This is because there are two different types of fax machines. We recommend starting with procedure 1. If there is no response midway through the session, one can easily switch to procedure 2 without hanging up. If one fails to give a command for several minutes the system will hang up and terminate the call.

Searching for information

To illustrate the suggested approach for searching for information on a specific subject recourse will be made to a simple example. Let us assume that information is required on the subject of *zinc injection*.

In order to obtain information about the *historical* development of the process, including dose rates at plants that utilize the process as well as sbstracts of and references to early publications, one should look at the subject index of the PROCESSES database which gives the *historical background*. From the subject index one can find the number of the document on *zinc injection* and obtain the document through fax using the threestep procedure described in the next section.

Having gotten the historical background, one may want the most up-to-date information on the status in this area. This would require searching the subject index of the RESEARCH database and then looking at the descriptions of the projects found on the subject of *zinc injection* in the document list of the RESEARCH database. One may then fax documents of interest to oneself. Finally, it may be necessary to know what the plants are doing in this area. This would require an examination of the subject index and document list of the HEALTH PHYSICS database. It should be noted that the higher the document number, the more up-to-date is the information in most databases.

Other comments

It is our intention to use this section of the ALARA Handbook to provide a complete *key* to the organization and utilization of the ACEFAX on-line information system. It contains all the basic lists and subject indices. In future issure of *ALARA Notes*, we shall devote one section to providing only new information on ACEFAX. For example, all *new* documents enetered into the system will be listed. Moreover, any modifications to the system will be noted in future issues of *ALARA Notes*. However, the present section in the handbook should be retained for basic information on ACEFAX.

Conclusion

The ALARA Center's fax information system was started with modest objectives. It was developed to provide the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the ALARA community a great deal of information in various areas of ALARA. For this service to remain successful, it is important for our users not only to continue to use the system, but also to feed information into it, so that it may be used by others for he benefit of all radiation workers. Information Request Forms are provided in section 35.6 for this purpose. We hope that the changes in the ACEFAX system will prove helpful and assist users in rapidly accessing needed information.