



## CANADIAN NUCLEAR WORKERS' COUNCIL

# Canada's Nuclear Industry Strong Regulatory Oversight

### Key Points:

- Canada's Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) is an independent regulatory agency of the Government of Canada that reports to Parliament through the Ministry of Natural Resources.
- The *Nuclear Safety and Control Act* (NSCA) sets the regulatory framework under which the CNSC operates and enforces regulations.
- The Commission regulates the use of nuclear energy and materials to protect the health, safety and security of Canadians and the environment, and our international commitments on the peaceful use of nuclear energy.
- The CNSC regulates all nuclear-related facilities and activities: uranium mines and mills; uranium fuel fabricators and processing; nuclear power plants; waste management facilities; nuclear substance processing; industrial and medical applications; nuclear research and education; and, export and import control.
- Canada's nuclear industry is among the most highly regulated in the world. The CNSC is recognized for its international bilateral and multilateral cooperation and participates in peer reviews and shares practices.

Canada has played a pioneering role in the mining of uranium and development of nuclear energy technology. Established in 1946, Canada's Atomic Energy Control Board (AECB), was one of the first nuclear regulatory agencies in the world.

Today, its' successor is the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC). The AECB became the CNSC with the enactment of the *Nuclear Safety and Control Act* in 2000.

### Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission

Over 2000 licensees are regulated by the CNSC in the areas of: nuclear power plants; heavy water production plants; uranium mines and mills; uranium processing and fuel fabrication; nuclear research and test facilities and Non-Power reactors (e.g. at universities); nuclear substances and radiation devices; nuclear substance processing facilities; radioactive waste and waste management facilities; mildly contaminated lands; security; dosimetry; packaging and transport of nuclear substances; import and export of nuclear materials and substances; and, personnel certification.

Two components — the Commission and the staff organization — make up the CNSC. Most of the agency's funding is provided by the license fees.

The Commission Tribunal, comprised of up to seven permanent Commission members and of temporary members appointed by the government, acts as an independent, quasi-judicial tribunal and court of record. One permanent Commission member is designated as the CNSC's President and Chief Executive Officer. The Tribunal considers the views, concerns and opinions of the public and interested parties via public hearings and meetings when making decisions on the licensing of nuclear-related activities, establishing regulations, and, setting regulatory policy on issues affecting the Canadian nuclear industry. Commission hearings are public and are webcast. The Canadian Nuclear Workers Council participates as an intervenor at CNSC License hearings and provides comments regarding CNSC regulations.

CNSC staff are situated in Ottawa, at one site office at Chalk River and four site offices at the power plants, and in four regional offices across the country. They monitor, inspect and evaluate the performance of licensed activities and nuclear power plants and contribute to the development of international nuclear safety standards. The employees at the CNSC are unionized and are members of the Public Institute of the Public Service (PIPS) Union.

### **Regulatory Framework**

The *Nuclear Safety and Control Act* sets the regulatory framework under which the CNSC operates and enforces regulations.

Protecting the environment and the health and safety of workers and the public is a major focus of CNSC regulations. Maximum radiation doses are based on recommended standards for radiation protection of workers and the public from the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP is an international organization of independent scientists). Worker exposures are reported to Health Canada's National Dose Registry.

The NSCA regulations require licenses for almost all activities. Persons or organizations preparing a site, constructing, operating, decommissioning or abandoning a nuclear facility must first obtain a license from the CNSC. Regulations stipulate the prerequisites for the license as well as the obligations of the licensees.

License applicants must provide documentation demonstrating compliance with all CNSC requirements. Commission hearings are held for license applications for large facilities. For new nuclear plants, applications must be accompanied by extensive safety and environmental assessment reports before construction can begin. Compliance with regulations and license conditions is ensured by regular CNSC staff inspections during construction of a facility and throughout its operating life and by reviews of licensee reports. Operating licenses are typically for two years compared to other jurisdictions where they are granted for periods of up to 40 years. Extensive reviews are undertaken by the CNSC before any license renewal is issued.

### **Convention on Nuclear Safety**

Canada was one of the first signatories to the Convention of Nuclear Safety adopted in 1994. The Convention represents the international community's commitment to the safe operation and effective regulation of nuclear power plants worldwide.

For more information on the CNSC, visit their website at [www.nuclearsafety.gc.ca](http://www.nuclearsafety.gc.ca).