

Transport regulation review process

For decades the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Transport Safety Regulations, known as TS-R-1, have set the standards for the worldwide transport safety regulatory regime. The premier body within the IAEA recommending on transport safety regulation review and implementation is the Transport Safety Standards Committee (TRANSSC).

In 1999 the IAEA introduced a system for a two-year process of review and revision of the Transport Safety Regulations. The intention was to make the process more efficient, more user-friendly and to harmonise the IAEA Regulations for the Transport of Radioactive Materials with the regulations for the transport of other classes of dangerous goods. While industry has been supportive of the review process, WNTI played a substantial role in advancing ideas for streamlining it.

In particular, WNTI has emphasised that safe and efficient transport operations are enhanced by stability, and that proposals for change should focus on safety which can be justified in terms of cost and benefit. WNTI favoured a more efficient process which would begin with a preliminary review of the current regulations to determine if a request for proposals for change on safety grounds was necessary.

A new process has now been defined by the IAEA which retains the two-year cycle, remains synchronised with the UN process for regulation review, but would only follow the preliminary review with a revision process if TRANSSC considered proposals for change to be sufficiently important in terms of safety. This approach should prove to be more workable and efficient for transport.