

# American Nuclear Society

**format and content for safety analysis  
reports for research reactors**

## an American National Standard

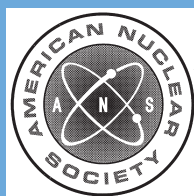
### **REAFFIRMED**

**January 19, 2023**

**February 27, 2018**

**ANSI/ANS-15.21-2012 (R2023)**

This standard has been reviewed and reaffirmed with the recognition that it may reference other standards and documents that may have been superseded or withdrawn. The requirements of this document will be met by using the version of the standards and documents referenced herein. It is the responsibility of the user to review each of the references and to determine whether the use of the original references or more recent versions is appropriate for the facility. Variations from the standards and documents referenced in this standard should be evaluated and documented. This standard does not necessarily reflect recent industry initiatives for risk informed decision-making or a graded approach to quality assurance. Users should consider the use of these industry initiatives in the application of this standard.



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**American National Standard  
Format and Content for  
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Secretariat  
**American Nuclear Society**

Prepared by the  
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## **American National Standard**

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Comments on this standard are encouraged and should be sent to Society Headquarters.

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- (2) reference to the applicable standard edition, section, paragraph, figure, and/or table;
- (3) the purpose(s) of the inquiry;
- (4) the inquiry stated in a clear, concise manner;
- (5) a proposed reply, if the inquirer is in a position to offer one.

Inquiries should be addressed to

American Nuclear Society  
ATTN: Standards Administrator  
555 N. Kensington Avenue  
La Grange Park, IL 60526

or [standards@ans.org](mailto:standards@ans.org)

## Foreword

(This Foreword is not a part of American National Standard “Format and Content for Safety Analysis Reports for Research Reactors,” ANSI/ANS-15.21-2012.)

The American Nuclear Society (ANS) Standards Committee established Subcommittee ANS-15 in the fall of 1970 with the task of preparing a standard for the operation of research reactors. In January 1972, this charter was expanded to include the task of preparing standards for all aspects of research reactor needs. To implement this enlarged responsibility, Subcommittee ANS-15 established a number of working groups to develop standards for consideration and complementary action. This standard addresses itself to the format and content of safety analysis reports (SARs) for research reactors.

Working Group ANS-15.21 was formed in 1991 to develop ideas and concepts leading to a standard for guidance on the format and content of a research reactor SAR, taking into account available guidance and recognizing that many research reactor SARs have successfully presented descriptive and analytical information through the use of a simple format and limited content.

This standard recognizes the merits of the historical guidance (Regulatory Guide 1.70, “Standard Format and Content of Safety Analysis Reports for Nuclear Power Plants”), the work by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission on guidance for nonpower reactors (NUREG-1537, “Guidelines for Preparing and Reviewing Applications for the Licensing of Non-Power Reactors”), the work of the U.S. Department of Energy (Order 5480.23, “Nuclear Safety Analysis Reports”), and the International Atomic Energy Agency work that encompasses safety analysis documentation (Safety Series 35).

It is recognized that a power station has huge and variable sources of stored energy, dedication to highly reliable on-line power, massive containment and energy control features, and extremely harsh equipment operating environments. Research reactors, on the other hand, are small, noninvasive facilities with low fission product inventories, minimal stored energy, and simple equipment environments, resulting in small risk compared to nuclear power plants. This standard recognizes the considerably reduced risks, markedly simpler systems, and unique mission of research reactors. A graded approach to content, level of description, and level of analysis is thus very important. It is recognized that it is neither necessary nor possible to apply the same degree of description or analysis for all systems or events. Where this standard uses terms such as “appropriate” or “as necessary,” these are to be interpreted as meaning such variation in the degree of description and analysis.

Nuclear critical assemblies (facilities operating in the context of ANSI/ANS-1-2000 (R2012), “Conduct of Critical Experiments”) often have flexible cores and generally do not have coolant systems, fission product inventories, radioactive waste streams, or confinement systems. Therefore, many of the requirements of this standard are not appropriate for nuclear critical assembly facilities, and it is beyond the scope of the working group to include alternative guidance.

Since the standard provides guidance on how facility descriptive information is presented and does not introduce new criteria for any aspect of design, construction, or operation, a very limited definition section is included.

SARs are used extensively by analysts, operations staff, review groups, and licensing and chartering agencies in support of the research reactors’ unique mission. The SAR provides the central repository of information used for performing analysis, determining bounding conditions, and establishing the foundation of technical specifications.

In this process of creating standards against the background of established and varied practices in many operating facilities, it is important to consider the following:

- (1) It is not intended that the standard be used as a demand model for backfitting purposes;
- (2) The standard should be a vital aid for the new owner-agency;
- (3) The standard should be helpful for the facility undergoing change or modification;
- (4) Thoughtful use of the standard by the industry should ease the burden of licensing and chartering agencies.

It is affirmed further that the use of any standard of performance, conduct, or excellence is volitional. The decision to use a standard is a management matter, presumably based on technical advisement.

Guidance may be found in the following supplementary American National Standards developed for research reactors:

ANSI/ANS-15.1-2007, “The Development of Technical Specifications for Research Reactors”;

ANSI/ANS-15.2-1999 (R2009), “Quality Control for Plate-Type Uranium-Aluminum Fuel Elements”;

ANSI/ANS-15.4-2007, “Selection and Training of Personnel for Research Reactors”;

ANSI/ANS-15.7-1977 (R1986) (withdrawn), “Research Reactor Site Evaluation”;

ANSI/ANS-15.8-1995 (R2005), “Quality Assurance Program Requirements for Research Reactors”;

ANSI/ANS-15.10-1994 (withdrawn), “Decommissioning of Research Reactors”;

ANSI/ANS-15.11-2009, “Radiation Protection at Research Reactor Facilities”;

ANSI/ANS-15.15-1978 (R1986) (withdrawn), “Criteria for the Reactor Safety Systems of Research Reactors”;

ANSI/ANS-15.16-2008, “Emergency Planning for Research Reactors”;

ANSI/ANS-15.17-1981 (R2000) (withdrawn), “Fire Protection Program Criteria for Research Reactors”;

ANSI/ANS-15.19-1991 (withdrawn), “Shipment and Receipt of Special Nuclear Material by Research Reactor Facilities.”

This standard might reference documents and other standards that have been superseded or withdrawn at the time the standard is applied. A statement has been included in the references section that provides guidance on the use of references.

This standard does not incorporate the concepts of generating risk-informed insights, performance-based requirements, or a graded approach to quality assurance. The user is advised that one or more of these techniques could enhance the application of this standard.

The working group included a broad spectrum of expertise in research reactor operations, experiment and reactor analysis, SARs, and interactions with chartering and licensing agencies. The members represent a wide variety of research reactors—including those at universities, national laboratories, and government

facilities—and participation in international standards work. Working Group ANS-15.21 of the ANS Standards Committee had the following membership:

A. Adams, Jr. (Chair), *U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission*

S. Miller, *Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute, National Naval Medical Center*

S. Reese, *Oregon State University*

C. Stanley, *Idaho National Laboratory*

The membership of Subcommittee ANS-15, Operation of Research Reactors, at the time of the approval of this standard, was the following:

D. S. O’Kelly (Chair), *National Institute of Standards and Technology*

A. Adams, Jr., *U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission*

L. Bobek, *University of Massachusetts Lowell*

J. Bryson, *Sandia National Laboratories*

C. D. Cooper, *Idaho National Laboratory*

D. Clovis, *Sandia National Laboratories*

L. Foyto, *University of Missouri Research Reactor Center*

M. Gildner, *Oak Ridge National Laboratory*

M. Krause, *University of Texas at Austin*

C. McKibben, *University of Missouri Research Reactor Center*

S. Miller, *Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute, National Naval Medical Center*

T. J. Myers, *National Institute of Standards and Technology*

S. Reese, *Oregon State University*

T. R. Schmidt, *Sandia National Laboratories*

W. Schuster, *National Institute of Standards and Technology*

J. Sease, *Oak Ridge National Laboratory*

C. Stanley, *Idaho National Laboratory*

M. H. Voth, *U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission*

Consensus Committee N17, Research Reactors, Reactor Physics, Radiation Shielding, and Computational Methods, had the following membership at the time it reviewed and approved this standard:

T. M. Raby (Chair), *National Institute of Standards and Technology*

A. O. Smetana (Interim Chair), *Savannah River National Laboratory*

A. Weitzberg (Vice Chair), *Individual*

S. L. Anderson, *Westinghouse*

W. H. Bell, *American Institute of Chemical Engineers*

R. R. Brey, *Health Physics Society*

R. E. Carter, *Individual*

D. M. Cokinos, *Brookhaven National Laboratory*

M. L. Corradini, *National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurement*

B. K. Grimes, *Individual*

M. A. Hutmaker, Jr., *U.S. Department of Energy*

A. C. Kadak, *Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

L. I. Kopp, *Individual*

P. M. Madden, *U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission*

(Alt. A. Adams, Jr., *U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission*)

J. F. Miller, *Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers*

T. J. Myers, *National Institute of Standards and Technology*

D. S. O’Kelly, *National Institute of Standards and Technology*

J. E. Olhoeft, *Individual*

R. E. Pevey, *University of Tennessee–Knoxville*

C. T. Rombough, *CTR Technical Services, Inc.*

C. E. Sanders, *University of Nevada–Las Vegas/Sanders Engineering*

T. R. Schmidt, *Sandia National Laboratories*

A. O. Smetana, *Savannah River National Laboratory*

R. Tsukimura, *Aerotest Operations*

A. R. Veca, *General Atomics*

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