



The United States Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program

Department of the Navy and Department of Energy

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A strong Navy is crucial to the security of the United States, a nation with worldwide interests which conducts the vast majority of its trade via transoceanic shipment. Navy warships are deployed around the world every hour of every day to provide a credible "forward presence," ready to respond on the scene wherever America's interests are threatened. Nuclear propulsion plays an essential role in this, providing the mobility, flexibility, and endurance that today's smaller Navy requires to meet a growing number of missions. About 45 percent of the Navy's major combatants are nuclear-powered: 11 aircraft carriers, 53 attack submarines, and 18 strategic submarines (the Nation's most survivable deterrent) — 4 of which were removed from strategic service and converted to a covert, high-volume, precision strike platform designated as SSGN. The mission of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program, also known as Naval Reactors, is to provide militarily effective nuclear propulsion plants and ensure their safe, reliable, and long-lived operation. This mission requires the combination of fully trained U.S. Navy men and women with ships that excel in endurance, stealth, speed, and independence from logistics supply chains. Presidential Executive Order 12344 and Public Laws 98-525 and 106-65 set forth the total responsibility of Naval Reactors for all aspects of the Navy's nuclear propulsion, including research, design, construction, testing, operation, maintenance, and ultimate disposition of naval nuclear propulsion plants. The Program's responsibility includes all related facilities, radiological controls, environmental safety, and health matters, as well as selection, training, and assignment of personnel. All of this work is accomplished by a lean network of dedicated research laboratories, nuclear-capable shipyards, equipment contractors and suppliers, and training facilities that are centrally controlled by a small headquarters staff. The Director, Naval Reactors, is Admiral Kirkland H. Donald; who also serves as a Deputy Administrator in the National Nuclear Security Administration. Naval Reactors maintains an outstanding record of over 145 million miles safely steamed on nuclear power. The Program currently operates 103 reactors and has accumulated over 6,300 reactor-years of operation. A leader in environmental protection, the Program has published annual environmental reports since the 1960s, showing that the Program has not had an adverse effect on human health or on the quality of the environment. Because of the Program's demonstrated reliability, U.S. nuclear-powered warships are welcomed in more than 150 ports of call in over 50 foreign countries and dependencies. Since USS NAUTILUS (SSN 571) first signaled "UNDERWAY ON NUCLEAR POWER" over 50 years ago in 1955, our nuclear-powered ships have demonstrated their superiority in defending the country—from the Cold War, to today's unconventional threats, to advances that will ensure the dominance of American seapower well into the future.

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