available to Agency inspectors where possible, and in no circumstances shall the furnishing of records be extended beyond 30 days from the initial request.

As an additional matter, the Agency believes that on occasion, EPA personnel may need to conduct sampling and analysis or monitoring of the disposal system. Such sampling may include split sampling, in which portions of samples taken by the DOE shall be furnished to EPA for analysis. Through split sampling, EPA can independently verify the results of DOE analyses. Moreover, by taking such samples, EPA will be better equipped to evaluate the quality of data being produced, as well as gain a better understanding of the disposal system.

EPA proposes that its inspection privileges be broad enough to allow the Agency to inspect activities that may provide information used to support compliance application(s) and are deemed by the Administrator or the Administrator's authorized representative to be relevant to a compliance certification or determination. This may include, but is not necessarily limited to, examination of quality assurance procedures, waste characterization activities, experimental programs, computer operations, and data collection activities, insofar as all of these items may affect the WIPP's ability to comply with the 40 CFR part 191 disposal regulations. Significantly, under today's proposal, EPA inspections would be limited to locations to which the Department has rights of access but would not be limited to activities which occur at the WIPP facility. As discussed above, if an activity can potentially affect the WIPP's ability to comply with the Agency's disposal regulations, it shall be subject to potential inspection by EPA personnel. For instance, EPA may inspect WIPP-destined waste generation and storage sites because waste characterization activities often occur at these sites.

Quality Assurance

To help assure that calculations of compliance with 40 CFR part 191, subparts B and C, are based upon sound data and information, the Agency proposes to include compliance criteria addressing quality assurance (QA). EPA is proposing that the Department implement a QA program that meets the requirements of the American Society of Mechanical Engineer's (ASME) "Quality Assurance Program Requirements for Nuclear Facilities" (NQA-1-1989 Edition), ASME's "Quality Assurance Requirements of Computer Software for Nuclear Facility Applications" (NQA 2a-1990 addenda, part 2.7 to ASME

NQA-2-1989 edition), and ASME's 'Quality Assurance Program Requirements for the Collection of Scientific and Technical Information on Site Characterization of High-Level Nuclear Waste Repositories" (NQA-3-1989 edition—excluding Section 2.1 (b) and (c)). EPA is proposing to use the ASME standards referenced above because it appears they offer the most comprehensive and specific set of QA requirements for all compliance-related elements of the disposal system. EPA solicits comment on whether these standards are the most appropriate to use for this purpose.

With respect to data collected prior to the implementation of the ASME standards, EPA is proposing that such data be acceptable for the purpose of supporting any applications for compliance certification if it can be demonstrated to have been collected: (1) Under a QA program that is equivalent in scope and implementation to the NQA series, or (2) through a method otherwise approved by the Administrator for use at the WIPP. Today's proposal does not include any specific criteria identifying how such equivalence should be demonstrated, nor is there any specification about what the Agency will consider in approving QA plans. The Agency intends to issue guidance on this topic in the future.

The Agency is proposing to allow a flexible approach on quality assurance for data collected prior to implementation of the ASME NQA series because the Agency recognizes that unless a method exists for qualifying such "old data," the efforts in collecting such "old data" will be wasted. It is likely that a large portion of the data submitted in support of an application for certification of compliance will be "old data." To prohibit the inclusion of such data if the data can be demonstrated to be of equivalent quality to "new data," or is sufficiently reliable for approval by the Administrator, would be unreasonable because data that are sufficiently reliable should be included in the analysis. The Agency solicits comment

on this approach. The ASME NQA-1-1989 edition sets forth requirements for the "establishment and execution of quality assurance programs for the siting, design, construction, operation, and decommissioning of nuclear facilities."

The NQA-2(a)-1990 addenda (part 2.7) to ASME NQA-2-1989 edition standard is directed toward establishing requirements for "the development, procurement, maintenance, and use of computer software, as applied to the

design, construction, operation, modification, repair, and maintenance of nuclear facilities." More specifically, it applies to computer software "used to produce or manipulate data which is used directly in the design, analysis, and operation of structures, systems, and components."

The NQA-3-1989 edition standard sets forth quality assurance requirements for "the collection of scientific and technical information for site characterization of high-level nuclear waste repositories." The requirements apply to "activities which could affect the quality of scientific and technical information collected as part of the site characterization phase of high-level nuclear waste repositories * [which include] as a minimum: (a) Readiness reviews: (b) peer reviews: (c) data and sample management; (d) data collection and analysis; (e) coring; (f) sampling; (g) in situ testing; and (h) scientific investigations.

EPA is proposing criteria which require submission of information which demonstrates that QA programs have been established and executed for aspects of the WIPP disposal system important to the containment of waste in the disposal system. QA programs must address elements such as models used to support applications for certification of compliance, waste characterization, monitoring, field measurements, design of the disposal system (and actions taken to ensure compliance with design specification), use of expert judgment, and other factors important to the containment of radionuclides in the disposal system. EPA solicits comment on the appropriateness of the items listed above and on any other items which should be specifically included in such a list. The Agency also is proposing that applications for certification of compliance address how quality indicators such as data accuracy, precision, representativeness, completeness, comparability, and reproducibility have been or will be achieved in the collection of compliance data and information.

As a final matter, the Agency is proposing to conduct its own examination of DOE QA programs and plans through select inspections, management system reviews, and audits. This is to help assure that QA plans are implemented appropriately.

Models and Computer Codes

Computer models are needed to assess whether the WIPP disposal system will comply with the 40 CFR part 191 disposal regulations. In order for these computer models to perform their