Reactor 21 — Rule Revision Summary

v1 — Foundational Concept

The first version introduced the core idea of a cooperative card game where two players manage shared reactors using a standard deck. It established the basic mechanics of building reactors toward a target of 21, handling potential busts, and playing cards turn by turn. The framework was simple but created a clear direction for the game's identity.

v2 — Structured Gameplay and Defined Flow

This version added clearer turn sequencing, formal draw and discard piles, and a stronger cooperative decision-making structure. Stabilization was explained more thoroughly, card values were standardized, and early loss conditions were described. The game gained a more stable and teachable framework.

v3 — Complete Failure System and Reactor Permanence

The game expanded significantly here with a full system for handling unplaceable cards through Instability or Meltdown choices. Stabilized reactors became permanent and could no longer receive cards, and all win/loss requirements were clearly established. This stage produced the first fully playable and strategically meaningful ruleset.

v4 — Instant Stabilization and Improved Clarity

Reactor stabilization became immediate upon reaching 21, making the game smoother and eliminating timing confusion. Card placement logic, discard-pile drawing, and meltdown behavior were clarified. The rulebook became more readable and intuitive for new players.

v5 — Polished Rules and Standardized Components

This version brought the ruleset closer to a production-ready structure. Token quantities were finalized, all major procedures—including reshuffling and placement logic—were tightened, and terminology became consistent throughout. The cooperative nature of the game was reinforced, and the rules read as a professional, complete package.

v6 — Clean, Accessible, Publication-Grade Rulebook

The turn structure was refined for ease of learning, with plain language replacing symbolic notation. Discard-pile drawing rules became crystal clear, and stabilization, reshuffling, and loss systems were presented in finalized form. The entire rulebook was rewritten cohesively to serve as a clear, standalone rule document suitable for printing or digital distribution.

v7 — Nuclear Waste Mechanic and Full Deck Cycle System

A new Nuclear Waste Pile was introduced, deepening long-term consequences and strategic decision-making during meltdowns. Melted-down cards now remain out of circulation until the draw pile empties, adding tension as players manage reactor recovery and deck cycling. The reshuffle process, meltdown flow, and discard-pile drawing were integrated smoothly to support the new system, resulting in the most strategically complete version of Reactor 21.