



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs Region IV
612 E. Lamar Blvd., Suite 400
Arlington, TX 76011-4125
Telephone: (817) 860-8128

No. IV-10-036

Contact: Victor Dricks: (817) 860-8128
Lara Uselding: (817) 276-6519

November 8, 2010

E-Mail: OPA4.Resource@nrc.gov

NRC TO HOLD PREDECISIONAL ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCE WITH GE-HITACHI NUCLEAR ENERGY AMERICAS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold a predecisional enforcement conference with representatives of GE-Hitachi Nuclear Energy Americas on November 10 to discuss apparent violations of NRC regulations regarding the exposure of two employees to radioactive materials at the company's Vallecitos Nuclear Center in Sunol, Calif.

The conference will begin at 9 a.m. at the NRC's Region IV office, 612 East Lamar Blvd., Suite 400, Arlington, Texas. During the conference, the company will have an opportunity to address the apparent violations that occurred at their facility on February 16.

The company holds an NRC license authorizing it to conduct research examinations of spent nuclear fuel and manufacture sealed sources containing radioactive material.

During an inspection of the facility in April, the NRC learned that two radiation workers experienced uptakes of radioactive material when they opened a drum, in violation of site procedure, to collect samples for analysis from components in the drum. While the intakes were determined not to exceed NRC exposure limits, the company's failure to follow site procedures was an apparent violation of a license requirement.

In addition, the licensee's failure to conduct surveys following the incident also violated license requirements. And inspectors determined, the company also failed to report contaminated worker clothing found offsite to the NRC in a timely manner. None of the workers are expected to experience long-term adverse health effects as a result of the exposures.

The public is invited to observe the meeting. NRC officials will be available before the conclusion of the meeting to answer questions.

The decision to hold a predecisional enforcement conference does not mean that a determination has been made that violations have occurred or that enforcement action will be

taken. The purpose is to discuss the apparent violations, causes and safety significance, to provide the licensee with an opportunity to point out any errors, if any, in the NRC inspection report and to enable the company to outline its corrective actions.

No decision on the apparent violations or any contemplated enforcement action, such as a civil penalty, will be made at the conference. Those decisions will be made by NRC officials at a later time.

###

NRC news releases are available through a free list serve subscription at the following Web address: <http://www.nrc.gov/public-involve/listserver.html> . The NRC homepage at www.nrc.gov also offers a SUBSCRIBE link. E-mail notifications are sent to subscribers when news releases are posted to NRC's Web site.