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NRC Launches Special Inspection at Honeywell Uranium Conversion Facility

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has launched a special inspection at the Honeywell uranium conversion facility in Metropolis, Illinois, to assess a uranium hexafluoride leak that occurred at the plant Sept. 2.

At 8:06 a.m. Central time, a chemical alarm alerted Honeywell plant staff to a uranium hexafluoride – known as UF₆ – leak. Control room operators notified plant management, and the facility activated its local emergency response. By 8:35 a.m., the plant declared an [Alert](#), the lowest of the NRC’s two emergency classification levels for fuel facilities.

Honeywell officials said the UF₆ leak took place at a cylinder evacuation pump that clears containers after filling operations. No one at the facility was injured, and no material was released beyond the plant site.

“This marks our second special inspection related to UF₆ incidents since the plant resumed operations. Though no workers were impacted and there was no offsite release, any event involving uranium hexafluoride is potentially serious and warrants rigorous evaluation,” said NRC Region II Administrator Laura Dudes. “Our inspection will evaluate these issues to ensure they are fully addressed.”

The special inspection will examine the sequence of events and equipment conditions leading up to the leak. It will also confirm that plant staff and emergency teams adhered to safety protocols and compare this event with the UF₆ leaks from June. The NRC inspectors will also review any corrective actions the company has taken or plans to take.

Inspectors from the NRC are expected to spend several days at the facility before continuing their in-office review of the findings. The inspection team will document its findings and conclusions in a public report to be issued within 45 days of completing the inspection.