



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

61 Forsyth Street SW

Atlanta GA 30303

Web Site: www.nrc.gov/OPA

No. II-00-10

February 7, 2000

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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$2,750 FINE AGAINST WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY FOR RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS VIOLATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$2,750 civil penalty against West Virginia University in Morgantown, West Virginia, for a violation of NRC license requirements related to the security of radioactive materials the university uses for teaching and research.

The NRC has notified the university that the violation, found during an inspection in November 1999, includes several examples of the university staff failing to secure licensed materials from unauthorized removal or access.

On at least four occasions (including during the time of the November NRC inspection), WVU failed to adequately secure or maintain constant surveillance of portable gauges containing radioactive materials stored in an area of the Civil Engineering Building. In addition, during the November inspection, laboratories in the Mary Babb Randolph Cancer Center, the Health Sciences Center North and the Agricultural Sciences Center containing radioactive materials were found unlocked and unattended.

At a predecisional enforcement conference with the NRC, WVU outlined corrective actions designed to address the violations and prevent future problems. The NRC staff determined that since the university's own Radiation Safety Department had previously identified security problems with the gauges, the corrective actions, while comprehensive, were not initially effective in preventing recurrence.

The NRC also cited the university for several other violations that the agency felt did not warrant a proposed civil penalty. These less significant violations included the failure to prohibit eating and drinking in radioactive material work areas, failure to make proper surveys of radioactive material work areas, improper labeling of radioactive waste and failure to adequately post radiation signs in radioactive material work areas. Although the violations were not included in the proposed civil penalty, the agency was concerned that many of them had been previously identified by the Radiation Safety Department, but not effectively corrected.

The university has 30 days from receipt of the Notice of Violation to either pay the fine or protest its imposition.

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