

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
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NRC STAFF ISSUES CONFIRMATORY ORDER TO NUCLEAR CONTRACTOR
ON EMPLOYEE CONCERNS PROGRAM AND "SAFETY CONSCIOUS" ENVIRONMENT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has issued a confirmatory order to Morrison Knudsen Corporation of Cleveland, Ohio, on the company's agreement to take corrective actions to ensure that its employees feel free to raise safety concerns without fear of retaliation.

Morrison Knudsen and its affiliate, SGT LLC., are construction engineering firms with operations at a number of nuclear power plants and nuclear materials facilities regulated by the NRC.

The corrective actions are in response to the findings of an NRC investigation and a Department of Labor proceeding which found that a Morrison Knudsen employee had been discriminated against in 1997 for raising safety concerns while working at the Point Beach Nuclear Power Station in Wisconsin.

The NRC Office of Investigations determined that the employee's identification of deficiencies in welding procedures by Morrison Knudsen and SGT employees was at least a contributing factor in the company's decision to remove him from his engineering position in January 1997. A Department of Labor Administrative Law Judge ruled in October 1997 that the removal of the employee was in retaliation for his raising the safety concerns. The judge subsequently approved a settlement between the employee and Morrison Knudsen.

Federal statutes and NRC regulations prohibit employers at facilities licensed by the NRC from discriminating against employees who raise safety concerns.

The confirmatory order includes Morrison Knudsen's commitments to hire an independent consultant to review the company's employee concerns program and to put into effect the recommendations of the consultant for improvements. If it does

not implement a recommendation, Morrison Knudsen must explain to the NRC why it cannot do so.

The company will also set up a mandatory continuing training program for all managers and supervisors on how to maintain a safety conscious work environment and respond to employees who raise safety concerns. The training will be performed by the consultant or by an experienced and independent training organization.

The NRC staff has determined that its concerns regarding employee protection at Morrison Knudsen's headquarters and at temporary job sites at nuclear facilities can be resolved through the NRC's confirmation of the commitments made by the company. As a result, there will be no Notice of Violation or fine issued in the case.

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