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No. 96-06

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Friday, January 5, 1996)

NRC TO HOLD WORKSHOP JANUARY 18-19 IN MARYLAND
ON RADIOACTIVE DEVICES

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has scheduled a workshop in Rockville, Maryland, January 18 and 19 to discuss the need for changes in the regulatory program for certain devices containing radioactive materials.

Chairman Shirley Ann Jackson will present brief remarks to open the workshop, which will be held in the NRC auditorium at 11545 Rockville Pike from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on January 18, and will continue, if necessary, from 9:00 a.m. to noon the following day.

Radioactive material devices to be discussed may include gauges used to measure the thickness of material, self-luminous exit signs, gas chromatographs used in chemical analysis, and static eliminators.

As a result of inadequate licensee control, some devices have been mixed with metal scrap intended to be melted down and recycled into other products. In some cases, these devices have been accidentally smelted in steel mills, resulting in radioactive contamination of the mills themselves, metal products of the mills, and mill byproducts such as slag and furnace dust. In the United States, the costs of mill decontamination, waste disposal and temporary mill closings following the smelting have been as high as \$23 million per event. There also is a risk of radiation exposure to unsuspecting workers and members of the public.

A working group with seven members from the NRC and Agreement States (which are states that have assumed, by mutual agreement, part of the NRC's regulatory authority) is assessing the need for regulatory changes and developing recommendations for improving controls of the devices and ensuring proper disposal. The group hopes to complete its work in May.

The forthcoming workshop will provide interested persons an opportunity for input into the working group's assessment. Anyone may attend. Formal participation, however, will be focused on a roundtable discussion among invited representatives from the metal recycling industry and recycled metal consumers, device sellers and users, federal and state regulators, and citizen groups. Nonetheless, the public will be given opportunities throughout the workshop to comment on the issues presented for discussion.

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