

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Office of Public Affairs  
Washington, DC 20555  
Phone 301-415-8200 Fax 301-415-2234  
Internet:opa@nrc.gov

No. 96-60

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
(Wednesday, April 17, 1996)

NRC RELEASES ALCOA SITE IN OHIO FOR UNRESTRICTED USE  
FOLLOWING CLEANUP OF RADIOACTIVE CONTAMINATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has released an Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA) facility near Cleveland, Ohio, for unrestricted use, following cleanup of radioactive contamination to safe levels.

ALCOA and related companies used radioactive thorium at the site from 1900 to 1961. There is little information on the quantity and form of thorium used prior to 1954. From 1954 to 1961, thorium was used in the production of magnesium-thorium alloys. The facility operated under an Atomic Energy Commission license from 1954 to 1961, when the license expired.

Before license expiration, ALCOA transferred excess thorium back to Dow Chemical Company, the thorium supplier. In 1981 ALCOA certified that all licensed material had been disposed of. However, surveys performed at ALCOA from 1989 to 1992 showed remaining thorium contamination in several locations. In addition, depleted uranium from Chemetron Corporation, an adjoining facility, was found on the site.

ALCOA began decommissioning the site in 1991, with Chemetron performing cleanup activities for the depleted uranium. Based on the companies' remedial actions, NRC staff review of ALCOA and Chemetron radiological survey reports, and confirmatory surveys by NRC and its contractor (Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education), the NRC concluded that decommissioning has been satisfactorily completed and that further remediation is not required.

The NRC has removed the ALCOA site from its Site Decommissioning Management Plan, which identifies about 50 sites throughout the United States that are contaminated with radioactive materials and warrant special attention.

#