

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

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**NRC INCREASES BASE CIVIL PENALTIES FOR SOME FUEL CYCLE FACILITIES,
AMENDS ENFORCEMENT POLICY FOR GASEOUS DIFFUSION PLANTS**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is amending its enforcement policy to increase to \$55,000 from \$27,500 the base civil penalty for escalated enforcement actions against fuel fabrication facilities handling highly enriched uranium.

Facilities that will be affected are those at which uranium hexafluoride is chemically converted into uranium oxide and fabricated into ceramic pellets, loaded into fuel rods and bundled into fuel assemblies for reactors. The Commission has raised the base civil penalty affecting these plants to more accurately reflect the higher potential risks faced by workers and the greater concern about diversion or theft of special nuclear material.

In another action, the Commission has authorized the NRC staff to withhold enforcement action against gaseous diffusion plants in cases where compliance with a condition of their certificate to operate would either create a safety risk or unnecessarily call for a total plant shutdown without creating a safety benefit. Shutdown can create complications that could challenge safety systems.

These actions will become effective on publication in an upcoming edition of the Federal Register.

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