

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Office of Public Affairs, Region I  
475 Allendale Road King of Prussia, PA 19406  
Fax: 610/337-5241  
Internet: dps@nrc.gov or nas@nrc.gov

I-98-132

Contact: Diane Screnci (610/337-5330)  
Neil A. Sheehan (610/337-5331)

December 21, 1998  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NRC, NEW JERSEY MEDICAL SCHOOL TO DISCUSS APPARENT VIOLATIONS

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff and representatives of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Newark, N.J., will discuss two apparent violations of NRC requirements pertaining to the handling of radioactive materials on Wednesday, December 23.

Scheduled to begin at 3 p.m. in the Public Meeting Room at the NRC Region I office in King of Prussia, Pa., the predecisional enforcement conference will be open to the public for observation.

The university has an NRC license to use radioactive materials for medical diagnosis, treatment, research on humans and non-human research. During an unannounced inspection at the university from November 17 through 19, an NRC inspector found two apparent violations.

The more serious of the apparent violations was the finding that two vials containing a total of 136 microcuries of polonium-210 -- approximately 36 times the annual limit of intake -- were left unsecured and unattended in a research laboratory. The other apparent violation, discovered during a review of records, was the loss of a package containing 5 millicuries of hydrogen-3, or tritium, in December 1997.

The NRC's decision to hold a pre-decisional enforcement conference does not mean the agency has determined that a violation has occurred or that enforcement action will be taken. Rather, the purpose is to discuss apparent violations, their causes and safety significance; to provide the licensee an opportunity to point out any errors that may have been made in the NRC inspection report; and to enable the licensee to outline its proposed corrective actions.

No decision on the apparent violations will be made at the conference. Those decisions will be made by senior NRC officials at a later time.

#

