



NRC NEWS

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NRC STAFF SCHEDULES ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCE IN PUERTO RICO MAY 18 TO DISCUSS APPARENT VIOLATIONS WITH CAGUAS COMPANY

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled a predecisional enforcement conference with Turabo Corporation of Caguas, Puerto Rico, at 2:00 p.m. May 18 at the Hampton Inn, 6530 Isla Verde Avenue in Carolina to discuss regulatory concerns related to the loss of control of a device containing radioactive material at a temporary job site outside Ciales on March 2.

The device, a gauge containing radioactive material which is used to measure soil moisture and density, was left near the job site by a technician and was in the possession of members of the public for about 13 hours. The event was initially identified by the staff of the Puerto Rico Radiological Health Division, and the NRC staff conducted a follow-up inspection of the company's Caguas facility and the site near Ciales.

NRC officials say two apparent violations associated with the event have been identified and are being considered for enforcement action. The first involved the failure by the company to secure, limit access to, or maintain constant surveillance of the licensed radioactive material at the job site to prevent unauthorized removal. The second involves the failure to limit the dose in an unrestricted area to less than two millirem per hour. The NRC staff estimates that the maximum amount any individual member of the public could have received would be about 20 millirem, although the actual exposures are probably much lower. The NRC limit for exposure to members of the public is 100 millirem.

The decision to hold a predecisional enforcement conference does not mean that a determination has been made that a violation has occurred or that enforcement action will be taken. The purpose is to discuss apparent violations, their causes and safety significance, to provide the licensee with an opportunity to point out errors that may have been made in NRC inspection reports and to enable the company to outline its proposed corrective actions.

No decision on the apparent violations or any contemplated enforcement action, such as a civil penalty, will be made at the conference. Those decisions will be made by NRC officials at a later time.

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