



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION I

475 Allendale Road
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No. I-00-75

October 25, 2000

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REVISED DATE

NRC TO HOLD PUBLIC WORKSHOP IN WATERFORD, CONN., ON HANDLING OF DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will hold a public workshop in Waterford, Conn., on Wednesday, November 1, to review its handling of complaints by nuclear industry workers who allege they have been discriminated against by their employer after raising safety concerns.

The workshop will begin at 7 p.m. at the Waterford Town Hall, 15 Rope Ferry Road. It is one in a series of workshops the NRC is holding across the country to help evaluate agency policies to develop employee protection recommendations.

The agency's procedures for handling discrimination allegations and complaints are described in various parts of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations, the NRC enforcement policy and other agency guidelines. The overall objective of the employee protection regulations is to promote an atmosphere in which employees feel comfortable raising safety concerns or engaging in other protected activity without fear of reprisal. Thus, an effective and consistent NRC approach for dealing with discrimination cases is an important feature of encouraging and ensuring a safety-conscious work environment.

The NRC has formed a Discrimination Task Group to review the way the agency handles discrimination complaints filed by nuclear industry workers and recommend possible changes to the agency's regulations, enforcement policy or other agency guidelines. The Task Group also will consider issues raised in a petition for rulemaking filed by the Union of Concerned Scientists in October 1999. That petition asked the Commission to require NRC licensees to provide specific training to licensee management on implementing employee protection regulations.

The Task Group includes NRC headquarters and regional employees. It plans to interact with other federal agencies, including the Federal Aviation Administration, the Food and Drug Administration, the Department of Agriculture, the National Institute of Health, the Center for Disease Control, the Department of Labor and the Department of Energy, to understand how these agencies handle discrimination issues.

Draft recommendations from the Task Group will be published about the middle of next year for public comment.

Meetings will not be transcribed, but summaries of each workshop will be available from the NRC Public Document Room, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852, telephone: 301/415-4737. The group's charter and other pertinent documents related to its activities will be periodically posted at: <http://www.nrc.gov/OE> on the agency's web site. Additional information about upcoming meetings can be obtained by calling Barry Westreich at (301) 415-3456 or via e-mail: BCW@nrc.gov.

Persons desiring to make prepared oral presentations or statements at the workshop in Waterford should contact Mr. Westreich at least five days before the meeting at the same number so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

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