



NRC NEWS

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NRC SENDS SPECIAL INSPECTION TEAM TO PUERTO RICO

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has dispatched a special inspection team to review a reported radiation overexposure to two employees of Law Engineering and Environmental Services in Dorado, Puerto Rico.

On November 24, the company notified the NRC Operations Center that the radiation safety officer and another employee were changing radioactive sources on a radiography camera when they discovered the Iridium-192 source was not in its proper location during the exchange. Radiography is a process that uses radioactive materials to produce x-ray-like images of structures, pipes, welds and other objects to see if they may contain flaws.

During the brief time the two individuals were exposed to the source, the company estimates that they may have received a radiation exposure of 628 rem to their hands and/or fingers. The annual NRC exposure limit for extremities is 50 rem. The company also reported that one person's pocket dosimeter, a small device which measures radiation exposure, indicated a whole body dose of 150 millirem and the other person's dosimeter indicated a dose of 200 millirem. The annual NRC whole body exposure limit for nuclear workers is 5000 millirem (5 rem). The company has restricted the two employees from activities which could cause them to receive additional radiation exposure.

The special inspection team, which includes two inspectors from the NRC's regional office in Atlanta and one inspector from NRC headquarters in Rockville, Maryland, will review the circumstances surrounding the overexposure. The team will issue a written report, which will be available to the public, several weeks after the completion of the inspection.

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