



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC ISSUES BULLETIN ON POTENTIALLY DEFECTIVE VALVES MANUFACTURED BY HUNT VALVE COMPANY

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is requesting licensees who process, use, store, or transport uranium hexafluoride (UF₆) to verify that certain valves used on UF₆ cylinders meet NRC regulatory requirements and to remove potentially defective valves from service over the next 12 months. The NRC believes that there is no imminent safety concern that would necessitate immediate replacement of these valves, because there have been no UF₆ leaks reported due to the identified valve problems.

The agency has issued a bulletin notifying licensees who use UF₆ of potential problems with 1-inch valves manufactured by the Hunt Valve Company of Salem, Ohio. The bulletin requires the licensees to identify such valves in their possession and either replace them or determine through tests that they comply with existing NRC regulations, NRC licenses and certificates of compliance, and Department of Transportation regulations. Licensees are to ensure that UF₆ cylinders with such valves already installed are safely used during a transition period, not to exceed 12 months, and ensure that only valves verified to be compliant are in use after the end of the transition period.

Where Hunt 1-inch valves are already installed on stored cylinders containing depleted UF₆ and the cylinders are not to be further processed or transported off site, replacement of the valves is not being requested; instead, licensees are being asked to develop a sufficient safety justification for planned continued use of the Hunt valves on these cylinders.

Although there have been no leaks of UF₆ attributed to the problems cited in the bulletin, the valves are an important part of the cylinder's single containment boundary to prevent the release of radioactive and chemically hazardous material to the workplace and environment or leakage of water into the cylinder.

The NRC will hold a public meeting about its concerns regarding Hunt Valves and the actions specified in the bulletin. That meeting will take place September 16, from 9 a.m. to noon, in the NRC auditorium at Two White Flint North, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md.

In October 2002, the NRC notified licensees of two safety concerns relating to the Hunt valves: cracked packing nuts and significant deficiencies in the company's quality assurance program. On March 24, the NRC notified licensees that several Hunt valves failed hydrostatic testing at pressures

required by NRC regulations but well above pressures expected during normal operating conditions or potential accidents.

Because of the deficiencies in Hunt's quality assurance program, licensees are instructed not to rely on any information provided by the manufacturer when determining whether the valves meet NRC and Department of Transportation regulations.

Hunt has manufactured approximately 16,000 of the valves since production began in 1991.

The text of the bulletin will be available on the NRC web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/gen-comm/bulletins> .

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