

February 13, 2004

MEMORANDUM TO: Martin J. Virgilio, Director  
Office of Nuclear Material Safety  
and Safeguards

FROM: Robert C. Pierson, Director /RA/  
Division of Fuel Cycle Safety  
and Safeguards

SUBJECT: ADJUSTMENTS TO THE URANIUM RECOVERY INSPECTION  
PROGRAM

REFERENCE: "Recommendations to Improve the Uranium Recovery Inspection  
Program," Memo From R. C. Pierson to M. J. Virgilio, January 16, 2003

Following the referenced memo, inspection of the uranium recovery facilities was modified to include a review of the chemical safety programs at uranium recovery facilities. The Division of Fuel Cycle Safety and Safeguards performed inspections of the White Mesa (traditional uranium mill) and Smith Ranch (in-situ leach) facilities during FY2003 using headquarters based staff. These facilities were selected because they represented the widest possible range of expected performance. The inspection effort came from existing inspection resources, so there was no net increase in FTE allocated for uranium recovery inspections.

Based on the review, the following adjustments are recommended:

1. Continue the health physics inspection frequency of once per year at all operating facilities, and every two years at facilities in reclamation and standby, unless operating conditions or performance indicates otherwise. These inspections are performed by RIV. This inspection frequency was determined by the Uranium Recovery Risk Case Study (December 2001) and NUREG/CR-6733, "A Baseline Risk-Informed Performance-based Approach for In-situ Uranium Extraction Licensees."
2. Due to low risk and poor regulatory nexus, do not perform chemical safety inspections at the facilities. However, if the assistance of a chemical safety inspector is required, FCSS should be contacted. The decision to discontinue annual chemical safety inspections at uranium recovery facilities was discussed at several meetings with Uranium Processing Section and Inspection Section management and staff.
3. Chemical safety response to allegations, incidents, or major safety issues should be coordinated with FCSS.

CONTACT: M. N. BAKER, FCSS/NMSS  
301-415-6155

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CONTACT: M. N. Baker, FCSS/NMSS  
301-415-6155

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