



NRC NEWS

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION II

61 Forsyth Street SW, Atlanta GA 30303

Web Site: www.nrc.gov

No. II-04-020

March 27, 2004

CONTACT: Ken Clark (404)562-4416
Roger Hannah (404)562-4417

E-mail: OPA2@nrc.gov

NRC APPROVES RESTART OF FIRST STAGE IN URANIUM HEXAFLOURIDE PROCESS AT HONEYWELL PLANT IN ILLINOIS

After several inspections and meetings, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has informed officials of the Honeywell International, Inc., uranium hexafluoride processing plant in Metropolis, Illinois, that the agency has no objection to the restart of ore preparation at the facility.

Ore preparation is the first stage in a process that has been shut down since a December 22 release of uranium hexafluoride to the environment outside the plant. The NRC sent the company a Confirmatory Action Letter following the release which stated that Honeywell would discuss with the NRC both the results of its own investigation and proposed corrective actions prior to restarting the processes involved in the incident.

Based on NRC inspectors' reviews of corrective actions and observation of work activities, the agency is satisfied that the company's actions have been adequate to allow the safe restart of ore preparation. NRC inspectors will observe the restart of ore preparation and continue to review the company's activities related to the remaining stages of the process.

The NRC approval for ore preparation does not include any approval for the following stages in the uranium hexafluoride production process. Upon further inspection and review, NRC officials will make decisions on restarting those stages of the process.

###