



NRC NEWS

**UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
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NRC APPROVES RESTART OF SECOND STAGE IN URANIUM HEXAFLUORIDE PROCESS AT HONEYWELL PLANT IN ILLINOIS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff informed officials of the Honeywell International, Inc. uranium hexafluoride processing plant in Metropolis, Illinois, on April 14 that the agency has no objection to the restart of the second stage of a three-stage process leading to resumption of production at the facility.

On March 27, the NRC staff authorized the company to resume ore preparation, 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 April 14 authorization allows resumption of the production of uranium tetrafluoride (UF₄), called green salt. NRC inspectors continue to review company preparations to resume the fluorination process which culminates in production of the final product, uranium hexafluoride (UF₆).

The NRC sent the company a Confirmatory Action Letter following the December 22 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 and uranium tetrafluoride. NRC inspectors will continue to observe ore preparation and production of uranium tetrafluoride, along with the company's activities related to preparation for resumption of the final stage of the process.

Upon further inspection and review, NRC officials will make decisions on restarting the final stage of the process.

As previously announced, the NRC has scheduled another public meeting in Metropolis for April 21 to further discuss the company's improvement efforts and NRC inspection and review. The meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Second Floor large Courtroom at the Massac County Courthouse at 1 Superman Square. NRC officials will be available at the conclusion of that meeting to answer questions from interested observers. NRC officials said a decision on restart of the third and final manufacturing process may be made prior to the meeting.

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