

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
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Environmental Assessment Related to an Amendment of
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Materials License No. 08-01738-02,
Issued to The Department of the Army, Walter Reed Army Medical Center

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is considering amending Materials License Number 08-01738-02 and authorizing the release of the licensee's facilities in Building T-2 of the Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) in Washington, DC, for unrestricted use and has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) in support of this action.

SUMMARY: The NRC reviewed the results of the decommissioning of the WRAMC Building T-2 facility in Washington, D.C. WRAMC was authorized by U.S. Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), on February 18, 1959 to use radioactive materials for medical research, diagnosis, and therapy purposes at the site. In October, 2003, WRAMC ceased operations with licensed materials in Building T-2, and requested that the NRC release the facility for unrestricted use. Final decommissioning activities were performed under License 08-01738-02. Therefore, this license action is for Building T-2 in its entirety.

WRAMC has conducted surveys of the facility and determined that the facility meets the license termination criteria in 10 CFR Part 20, Subpart E. The NRC staff has evaluated the WRAMC request and the results of the surveys, and has developed an EA in accordance with the requirements of 10 CFR Part 51. The NRC has determined that a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is appropriate for the proposed action.

Introduction

WRAMC requested release for unrestricted use of the building T-2 at 6900 Georgia Avenue NW, Washington, DC, authorized for use of radioactive materials under NRC License No. 08-01738-02. The building is 50,000 square feet of general office and medical treatment space located in a mixed residential/commercial area.

License No. 08-01738-02 was issued on February 18, 1959, and amended periodically since that time. NRC-licensed activities performed at the Washington, DC site were limited to medical research. No outdoor areas were affected by the use of licensed materials.

Licensed activities in Building T-2 ceased completely on October 31, 2003, and the licensee requested release of the facility for unrestricted use. Based on the licensee's historical knowledge of the site and the conditions of the facility, the licensee determined that only routine decontamination activities, in accordance with licensee radiation safety procedures, were required. A decommissioning plan was not required to be submitted to the NRC. The licensee surveyed the facility, decontaminated or remediated areas as needed, and provided documentation that the

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facility meets the license termination criteria specified in 10 CFR Part 20, Subpart E and does not require additional decommissioning activities to be performed. The licensee demonstrated this using the screening criteria for radioactive materials described in 65 FR 37186.

The Proposed Action

The proposed action is to amend Materials License No. 08-01738-02 and to release Building T-2 of the WRAMC at 6900 Georgia Avenue, NW, Washington, DC for unrestricted use. By letter dated October 29, 2004, WRAMC stated that no further actions are required to remediate the facility and provided survey results which demonstrate that the Building T-2, Washington, DC facility is in compliance with the radiological criteria for license termination in 10 CFR Part 20, Subpart E, "Radiological Criteria for License Termination."

Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose of the proposed action is to amend NRC Materials License No. 08-01738-02, to release Building T-2 for unrestricted use. The licensee has requested this action to reduce their regulatory burden because they no longer intend to conduct licensed activities at this location. NRC is fulfilling its responsibilities under the Atomic Energy Act to make a timely decision on a proposed license amendment for release of facilities for unrestricted use that ensures protection of public health and safety and the environment.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The affected environment was described in the Introduction. The licensee has completed all remediation of Building T-2. The NRC staff has reviewed the surveys performed by WRAMC which the licensee provided to demonstrate compliance with 10 CFR 20.1402, "Radiological Criteria for Unrestricted Use." Based on its review, the staff has determined that the affected environment and environmental impacts associated with the release for unrestricted use of the WRAMC facilities are bounded by the impacts evaluated by the "Generic Environmental Impact Statement in Support of Rulemaking on Radiological Criteria for License Termination of NRC-Licensed Nuclear Facilities" (NUREG-1496). No outdoor areas were affected by the use of licensed materials and no non-radiological or cumulative impacts were identified.

Environmental Impacts of the Alternatives to the Proposed Action

Since the facility at the WRAMC site has already been surveyed and found acceptable for release for unrestricted use, the only alternative to the proposed action of amendment of the license and release of Building T-2 of the Washington, DC site for unrestricted use is no action. The no action alternative would result in no change to current conditions at the facility and the environmental impacts of this alternative do not differ from the impacts of the proposed action. However, maintaining Building T-2 under a license would impose an unnecessary regulatory burden and would restrict potential benefits from future uses of the site.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

The NRC staff has determined that the proposed action will not affect listed species or critical habitat. Therefore, no further consultation is required under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. Likewise, the NRC staff have determined that the proposed action is not the type of activity that has the potential to cause effects on historic properties. Therefore, no further consultation is required under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

NRC provided a draft of its Environmental Assessment to the District of Columbia for review. On February 2, 2005, the District of Columbia responded by letter and agreed with the conclusions of the EA.

Conclusions

The NRC staff has concluded that the proposed action complies with 10 CFR Part 20, Subpart E. Based on its review, the staff has determined that the affected environment and the environmental impacts associated with the release for unrestricted use of Building T-2 are bounded by the impacts evaluated in the "Generic Environmental Impact Statement in Support of Rulemaking on Radiological Criteria for License Termination of NRC-Licensed Nuclear Facilities" (NUREG-1496). Additionally, no non-radiological or cumulative impacts were identified. On the basis of the EA, NRC has concluded that there are no significant environmental impacts and the license amendment does not warrant the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement. Accordingly, it has been determined that a Finding of No Significant Impact is appropriate.

List of Preparers

Laurie Kauffman, Health Physicist, Division of Nuclear Materials Safety, Region I

List of References

1. NRC License No. 08-01738-02 inspection and licensing records.
2. Amendment Request for WRAMC Building T-2, 6900 Georgia Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20307-5000, dated October 29, 2004. [ADAMS Accession No. ML043220447].
3. Historical Site Assessment for WRAMC Building T-2, 6900 Georgia Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20307-5000, dated May, 7 2004. [ADAMS Accession No. ML043220460].
4. Final Status Survey for WRAMC Building T-2, 6900 Georgia Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20307-5000, dated October 14, 2004. [ADAMS Accession No. ML043220467].
5. Federal Register Notice, Volume 65, No. 114, page 37186, dated Tuesday, June 13, 2000, "Use of Screening Values to Demonstrate Compliance With The Federal Rule on Radiological Criteria for License Termination."

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6. Title 10 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 20, Subpart E, "Radiological Criteria for License Termination."
7. Title 10, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 51, "Environmental Protection Regulations for Domestic Licensing and Related Regulatory Functions."
8. NUREG-1496, "Generic Environmental Impact Statement in Support of Rulemaking on Radiological Criteria for License Termination of NRC-Licensed Nuclear Facilities."

The application for the license amendment and supporting documentation are available for inspection at NRC's Public Electronic Reading Room at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. Any questions with respect to this action should be referred to Laurie Kauffman, Decommissioning Branch, Division of Nuclear Materials Safety, Region I, 475 Allendale Road, King of Prussia, Pennsylvania 19406, telephone (610) 337-5323, fax (610) 337-5269.

Dated at King of Prussia, Pennsylvania this 15th day of February, 2005

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

/RA/

Ronald R. Bellamy, Chief
Decommissioning Branch
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Region I

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