



# NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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## **NRC'S CHRISTOPHER TRIPP TO RECEIVE ARTHUR S. FLEMMING AWARD FOR ENGINEERING**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Dr. Christopher Tripp, of the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, has been selected to receive a prestigious Arthur S. Flemming Award for Engineering.

Dr. Tripp is a criticality expert who has been a leader in using risk insights in the evaluation of criticality safety. He was the primary criticality safety license reviewer for the construction of a facility to manufacture mixed oxide (MOX) nuclear fuel for use in nuclear reactors. This was a first-of-a-kind safety review for the agency for this type of facility. It represented several firsts:

- First construction approval granted to a nuclear fuel cycle facility;
- First weapons-grade fuel facility authorized by the NRC; and
- First major application of NRC's risk-informed regulation governing licensing of special nuclear material.

Dr. Tripp dealt with numerous unique technical challenges posed by the criticality safety review of this facility including the need to evaluate design bases that had no regulatory precedent. While being cognizant of the unique chemical and metallurgical properties of plutonium and MOX, he evaluated proposed safety controls for nuclear fabrication processes not previously used in the United States.

After receiving his bachelor's and master degrees from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1989 and 1994, Dr. Tripp received his doctoral degree in experimental medium energy physics from RPI in 1995. His doctoral thesis was done at the Bates Linear Accelerator Center operated by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He has worked for ten years at NRC as a nuclear criticality safety inspector and technical reviewer in the Division of Fuel Cycle Safety and Safeguards. Other projects with which he has been involved include the Paducah Higher Assay Upgrade, MOX construction authorization, and a license application for a gas centrifuge plant.

The Flemming Awards were established by the Washington Downtown Jaycees in 1948 to honor outstanding Federal employees. Winners are selected from all areas of the federal and military service who have between three and 15 years of government service.

Twelve separate awards in different categories will be presented by The George Washington University in conjunction with the Arthur S. Flemming Awards Commission in June.

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