



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC ISSUES CONFIRMATORY ACTION LETTER TO SABIA, INC. FOLLOWING CONTAMINATION EVENT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued a Confirmatory Action Letter to Sabia, Inc. confirming the company's commitment to conduct health assessments of any workers potentially exposed to radioactive materials during an incident Feb. 29, and keep the Idaho Falls, Idaho, facility closed until it has been decontaminated.

The company holds NRC licenses authorizing it to manufacture and distribute gauges containing sealed radioactive materials that are used by the coal mining industry. The NRC has been coordinating its response to the event with officials from the Idaho Department of Homeland Security, the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality and the U.S. Department of Energy.

An NRC inspector visited the facility several hours after Sabia reported that a worker had been exposed to strontium-90 while disassembling a gauge. The worker was contaminated on his hands, face and clothing, and inhaled some of the material. Sabia officials have told the NRC their preliminary assessment suggests the individual received a radiation exposure below federal regulatory limits and should not suffer any long-term adverse health consequences.

The NRC inspector interviewed workers, inspected records and reviewed the company's adherence to NRC regulations for the storage, handling, use and security of radioactive materials. A second inspector was sent to the site Monday. Their findings will be detailed in a written report that will be made publicly available.

Under the terms of the Confirmatory Action Letter, NRC officials will review the adequacy of the company's follow-up activities to the incident. Sabia has agreed to submit a detailed decontamination plan to the NRC for review within 60 days. The facility will remain closed until the NRC verifies that it is safe to reopen in compliance with NRC requirements.

The Confirmatory Action letter will be available in the NRC's electronic document system at: <http://nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html> .

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