



NRC NEWS

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NRC PROPOSES \$3,250 FINE AGAINST A MISSOURI UNIVERSITY FOR VIOLATIONS OF NRC REGULATIONS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has proposed a \$3,250 fine against Washington University in St. Louis, Mo., for failure to account and control radioactive implant seeds used to treat cancer.

The NRC determined two violations occurred during an inspection conducted on May 22 of this year, at the university's medical center. The inspection was performed to investigate the circumstances surrounding the loss of two radioactive implant seeds.

On May 8, 2008 the medical center notified the NRC that two implant seeds were lost down a drain after a prostate cancer procedure was performed. A medical staffer used an applicator with a cartridge containing 15 seeds. The dose only required 13 seeds. After the procedure the unused seeds were left unattended. Later a nurse removed the cartridge from the applicator and placed it in a wash basin. The two unused seeds were washed down the drain into the sewer when the applicator was cleaned.

The violations involved a failure to control the radioactive material and failure to properly account for the unused seeds immediately after implantation.

"This situation is a concern because the medical center failed to exercise responsibility to control the radioactive materials," said NRC Regional Administrator James Caldwell. "We expect all companies that hold NRC licenses to safely and securely handle nuclear material by adhering to the regulations."

The agency concluded the university took appropriate corrective actions to address the violations.

Washington University in St. Louis has until Oct. 3 to pay or contest the fine. If the fine is contested and subsequently imposed by the NRC the company may request a hearing.

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