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CONTACT: Roger Hannah 404-997-4417
Joey Ledford 404-997-4416

NRC Begins Special Inspection at NFS Facility in Erwin

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will begin a special inspection Tuesday at the Nuclear Fuel Services facility in Erwin, Tenn., to assess the circumstances surrounding an unplanned chemical reaction event.

That unplanned reaction occurred on April 4 in a two-liter bottle stored in an access-controlled storage area. The bottle contained cleaning materials, some nitric acid and a small amount of uranium. There were no employee exposures or injuries during or after the event.

“Although no one was injured and there were no employee exposures, it could have been worse had employees been in that area at the time,” said NRC Region II Administrator Victor McCree. “Based on that potential, we needed to inspect exactly what happened and what steps are necessary to prevent it from happening again.”

During the special inspection, the NRC will review the company’s response and investigation of the incident, develop a time line and determine the actual and potential safety significance of the incident.

The special inspection will begin Tuesday and is expected to continue for about a week. The NRC will issue a report within 30 days of the completion of the inspection.