



**UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**

REGION III
2443 WARRENVILLE RD. SUITE 210
LISLE, IL 60532-4352

September 16, 2016

Mr. Craig Adams, Director
National Health Physics Program (115 HP/NLR)
Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
2200 Fort Roots Drive
North Little Rock, AR 72114

**SUBJECT: NRC INSPECTION REPORT 03034325/2016011(DNMS) – PORTLAND VA
MEDICAL CENTER, PORTLAND, OREGON**

Dear Mr. Adams:

On August 17, 2016, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) conducted a routine inspection at the Portland VA Medical Center, Portland, Oregon. The inspection was limited to a review of activities authorized under Permit Number 36-01395-01. The inspector conducted an exit meeting with the management and staff at the facility at the completion of the inspection.

The inspection was an examination of activities conducted under the Permit as they relate to radiation safety and to compliance with the Commission's rules and regulations. Within these areas, the inspection consisted of selective examinations of procedures and representative records, interviews with personnel, independent measurements, and observation of activities in progress. Within the scope of the inspection no violations of NRC requirements were identified; therefore, no response to this letter or the enclosed NRC Form 591M is required.

The following concerns were identified by the inspector and discussed with permittee management during the course of the inspection and at the exit meeting: 1) research labs where radioactive materials had been used were closed but not yet released for unrestricted use. The labs will remain in that state until the Radiation Safety Officer has time to complete the close-out surveys and release the labs for unrestricted use. The labs continue to be posted as having radioactive material although there is no radioactive material present; 2) inconsistencies were noted in the posting of emergency contact numbers and the location where radiation safety program documents were available for review; 3) an accumulation of radioactive waste was identified in a remote storage container; and 4) the 2015 annual audit report of the radiation safety program was still in draft form. We are providing these concerns for your awareness.

In accordance with Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) 2.390 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter and its enclosure will be available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room or from the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS), accessible from the NRC's website at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>.

C. Adams

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Should you have any questions concerning this inspection or the enclosed report, please contact Kevin Null of my staff at 630-829-9854.

Sincerely,



Patricia J. Pelke, Chief
Materials Licensing Branch
Division of Nuclear Materials Safety

Docket No. 030-34325
License No. 03-23853-01VA
Permit No. 36-01395-01

Enclosure:
IR 03034325/2016011(DNMS)

C. Adams

-2-

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Sincerely,

/RA/

Patricia J. Pelke, Chief
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Enclosure:
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OFFICE	RIII-DNMS		RIII-DNMS		RIII-DNMS		RIII	
NAME	Poston-Brown:ps PJPelke for		Null ¹ (via-e-mail)		Pelke			
DATE	9/15/2016		9/15/2016		9/15/2016			

¹ - These individuals concurred on the enclosed report; review and concurrence received via e-mail

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Docket File Information (Continued)

SAFETY INSPECTION REPORT AND COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

1. LICENSEE/LOCATION INSPECTED:

Department of Veterans Affairs
Under Secretary for Health
Washington, D.C.
Location: Portland VA Medical Center, Oregon

REPORT NUMBER(S) 2016011

2. NRC/REGIONAL OFFICE

Region III
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
2443 Warrenville Road, Suite 210
Lisle, IL 60532-4352

3. DOCKET NUMBER(S)

030-34325

4. LICENSE NUMBER(S)

03-23853-01VA

5. DATE(S) OF INSPECTION

August 17, 2016

PROGRAM SCOPE

The dose calibrator was maintained and geometry, accuracy, constancy and linearity were all current. Inventory and leak tests for the sealed source in inventory were performed as required. Various surveys for receipt of radioactive material, waste disposal and lab release were reviewed. Permitted radioactive material was appropriately secured. All equipment was appropriately calibrated.

No violations were identified. However, the inspector noted some concerns which were discussed with permittee management during the August 17 exit meeting. Specifically, the inspector identified the following: 1) There were research laboratories where permitted material was used and had been closed but not yet surveyed and released for unrestricted use. Further, some postings were not current. For example, there were research labs which were posted as having radioactive material present when research studies had stopped and no permitted material was present; 2) Inconsistencies were noted in the posting of emergency contact numbers and the location where radiation safety program documents were located for review; 3) An accumulation of radioactive waste was found in a remote storage container; and 4) The annual audit report for 2015 was still in draft form. The inspector indicated that these issues may be the result of limited resources for the broad radiation safety program at this facility.