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NRC Identifies Nine Abnormal Occurrence Events in FY 2020 Annual Report to Congress

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has [published](#) its annual report to Congress for fiscal year 2020 regarding Abnormal Occurrences involving the medical and industrial uses of radioactive material.

Nine Abnormal Occurrences were identified. Eight of these events were medical events, such as misadministration of radioactive material in the diagnosis or treatment of an illness. This represents a very small portion of the thousands of nuclear medicine and radiation therapy procedures involving radioactive material performed annually in the United States. The ninth event involved an unintended radiation exposure to an embryo or fetus during a medical procedure. No events at commercial nuclear power plants in fiscal year 2020 met the criteria requiring an Abnormal Occurrence declaration.

U.S. law defines an Abnormal Occurrence as an unscheduled incident or event that the NRC determines to be significant from the standpoint of public health or safety. The NRC sets specific criteria, most recently updated in October 2017, for determining which events qualify.

The report includes an appendix entitled, “Other Events of Interest,” that describes four events that did not meet the criteria to be declared Abnormal Occurrences but received significant attention from the NRC, state regulators or the public. Three of these were industrial events that resulted in worker exposures. The fourth was the severe storm that caused a loss of offsite power at the Duane Arnold nuclear power plant in Iowa in August 2020, leading the plant to permanently shut down earlier than its previous schedule.

The Report to Congress on Abnormal Occurrences, Fiscal Year 2020, is available on the NRC website as [NUREG-0090, Volume 43](#).