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Office of Public Affairs, Headquarters

Washington, DC. 20555-0001

www.nrc.gov ■ opa.resource@nrc.gov



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CONTACT: Scott Burnell, 301-415-8200

NRC Issues Annual Report on Abnormal Occurrences for FY 2017

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has released its annual report to Congress on abnormal occurrences for fiscal year 2017, citing 11 medical events involving radioactive materials. The report details the evaluation of each incident by the NRC, state agencies and licensees, as well as measures taken to ensure such incidents do not recur.

An accident or event is considered an abnormal occurrence if it involves a major reduction in the degree of protection of public health and safety. Abnormal occurrences can include, but are not necessarily limited to, moderate exposure to or release of radioactive material licensed by the NRC or a state agency; major degradation of safety-related equipment; or major deficiencies in design, construction, use of, or management controls for facilities or radioactive material.

For FY 2017, five reported abnormal occurrences happened at NRC licensees. All were medical events involving misadministration of radioactive material during cancer detection or treatment.

For FY 2017, six reported abnormal occurrences happened in Agreement States (the NRC has agreements with 37 states under which the states regulate industrial and medical uses of radioactive materials); all were medical events. Abnormal occurrences represent a very small fraction of the average number of nuclear medicine and radiation therapy procedures conducted annually.

Two of the 11 events occurred in previous fiscal years and are included because the NRC completed its evaluation of these events in FY 2017.

A section on “other events of interest” discusses one event that does not meet the abnormal occurrence criteria but attracted public interest. This was the human exposure event at the Department of Commerce’s National Institute of Standards and Technology in Gaithersburg, Md. A worker received a body dose after a broken ampoule resulted in radioactive contamination of the countertop and other surfaces of a laboratory.

The report on abnormal occurrences for fiscal year 2017 is published as [NUREG-0090](#), Volume 40. It was transmitted to Congress on June 8.