



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC STAFF TO MEET WITH ST. LOUIS V.A. MEDICAL CENTER TO DISCUSS IMPROPER DISPOSAL OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet on June 18 in Lisle, Illinois, with officials of the Veterans Health Administration to discuss possible violations of NRC requirements in two instances in which the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in St. Louis improperly disposed of radioactive material.

The meeting, called a Predecisional Enforcement Conference, will be held at 1 p.m. CDT in the Third Floor Conference Room of the NRC's Region III Office, 801 Warrenville Road, Lisle. Visitors should register with the receptionist in Suite 255. The public is invited to observe the business portion of the meeting and will have an opportunity to ask questions of the NRC staff before the meeting is adjourned.

On two occasions, March 14 and March 28, radioactive material was detected among trash received at a landfill disposal site in Roxana, Illinois. The Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety responded to the site, and found radioactive material which had originated with the V. A. Medical Center in St. Louis.

In one instance, a vial contained a small amount of radioactive material from the medical center's nuclear medicine department, and, in the second instance, glassware from a research laboratory had low levels of radioactive contamination.

The meeting will cover possible violations involved with the disposal of the radioactively contaminated material, and the medical center's failure to report to the NRC the loss of the contaminated glassware, which was required because of the amount of radioactive material involved.

Because of the type and quantities of radioactive material involved, no landfill worker or member of the public would have received a significant radiation exposure.

The decision to hold a predecisional enforcement conference does not mean that a determination has been made that a violation has occurred or that enforcement action will be taken. The purpose is to discuss apparent violations, their causes and safety significance, to provide the company with an opportunity to provide additional information on the situation, and to enable the company to outline its proposed corrective action.

No decision on the apparent violation or any contemplated enforcement action, such as a fine, will be made at the conference. Those will be made by NRC officials at a later time.

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