



NRC NEWS

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WESTINGHOUSE'S COLUMBIA PLANT AGREES TO IMPROVEMENTS THROUGH NRC ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued a Confirmatory Order to Westinghouse Electric Company's Columbia facility as part of a settlement agreement involving the actions of a former contractor foreman. That individual deliberately created inaccurate training records for his work group and also falsified ventilation system data when the required readings had not been taken. The foreman caused Westinghouse to be in violation of NRC requirements.

Westinghouse requested the alternative dispute resolution process to resolve differences with the NRC concerning the apparent violations and to discuss corrective actions. The confirmatory order documents Westinghouse's commitments to the NRC reached as part of the NRC's ADR process, which can be selected by the individual or license holder in place of traditional NRC enforcement. Often, the ADR process is more effective than traditional enforcement action.

The ADR process uses a mediator to help the NRC and the license holder or individual find the best way to address the causes of the violations. The ADR process strives to make sure that effective long-term solutions for correcting violations are identified and agreed upon; that the commitment to improvement is made; and that the individual or license holder meets the commitments made to the NRC in a way that ensures the agency's safety rules and regulations are implemented.

As part of the settlement agreement, Westinghouse has agreed to a number of corrective actions and enhancements, including procedure revisions, improved oversight of contractors and an incorporation of lessons learned into training. The company also agreed to an independent review of its employee concerns program as well as an assessment of manager training in investigating and documenting issues that may include wrongdoing. Some of the actions agreed to by Westinghouse go beyond what would have been required under the NRC's traditional enforcement process.

In consideration of the commitments made by Westinghouse, the NRC will not propose a civil penalty, issue a Notice of Violation or take other enforcement action on the matter. The NRC will, however, evaluate adherence to the commitments during future inspections.

Copies of the letter and the Confirmatory Order will be available in the electronic reading room on the NRC website at www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html or by contacting the Office of Public Affairs in Region II with the contact information on this release. Westinghouse's response, should it provide one, will also be available.

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