



NEWS

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DOE/NNSA Cites Los Alamos National Laboratory for Price Anderson Violations

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Department of Energy's (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) has issued a Preliminary Notice of Violation (PNOV) to the University of California, the contractor for the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), for violations of nuclear safety rules and procedures involving the inadequate handling of plutonium contaminated piping, ineffective personnel controls during radiography operations, failure to operate experimental equipment in accordance with safety requirements, and inadequate cleaning of laboratory systems to prevent buildup of potentially hazardous material. The PNOV also documents the failure of LANL to ensure that previously identified work control problems were effectively identified, controlled and corrected. The violations took place in September 2002.

No significant consequences to workers, the general public, or the environment resulted from any of the cited operational events. For at least one event, however, worker radiation exposures could have been significant and were not limited by planned work controls. Other cited events involved the operation of nuclear facilities or equipment outside of the safety controls established by DOE/NNSA. DOE/NNSA has chosen to take this action because of the long-standing problems of LANL management to recognize and address nuclear safety deficiencies at the institutional level. LANL is exempt from civil penalty by statute and no civil penalty can be issued in association with the current PNOV. If not exempt, a civil penalty of \$385,000 would have been assessed, based on the significance of the violations.

The Price-Anderson Amendments Act of 1988 authorizes the Energy Department to undertake regulatory actions against contractors for violations of its nuclear safety requirements. The enforcement program encourages DOE contractors to identify and correct nuclear safety deficiencies at an early stage, before they contribute to or result in more serious events.

Additional details on this and other enforcement actions are available on the Internet at <http://www.eh.doe.gov/enforce>.

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