



NRC NEWS

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NRC PROPOSES \$17,500 CIVIL PENALTY FOR GLOBAL NUCLEAR FUEL – AMERICAS LLC IN WILMINGTON

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has proposed a \$17,500 civil penalty against Global Nuclear Fuel – Americas LLC in Wilmington, N.C., for violations of NRC requirements related to a March incident at the fuel manufacturing facility.

The violations involved a failure of Global Nuclear Fuel’s staff to maintain mass control of uranium oxide in particulate air filters in one area of the facility. On March 2, Global Nuclear Fuel advised the NRC that its staff had identified that an excessive amount of uranium oxide powder has been present in the filter housing. There was no actual criticality, though the quantity of material could have posed a criticality threat if other safety features had not been in place.

A criticality can occur when nuclear materials come together in sufficient quantity or in a container of correct shape to initiate a chain reaction resulting in either a “burst” or a sustained release of radiation. A small criticality event would not be expected to affect people or the environment outside the facility, but could be serious for workers in the immediate area.

An NRC Special Inspection Team identified the violations associated with the failure to maintain mass control. At a Sept. 29 predecisional enforcement conference, Global Nuclear Fuel officials acknowledged the violations and presented details of corrective actions to prevent a recurrence of the event.

The NRC proposed a \$17,500 civil penalty for the violations partly because the company has been the subject of escalated enforcement within the past two years. The company has 30 days to either pay the civil penalty or protest its imposition.

A copy of the notice of violation is available on the NRC [website](http://www.nrc.gov) in [ADAMS](#) using the reference number ML11318A219. In addition, the inspection reports documenting the violations are also available online.

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