



NRC NEWS

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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$16,250 FINE AGAINST WESTINGHOUSE FOR SAFETY VIOLATIONS AT SHUTDOWN FUEL FACILITY IN MISSOURI

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$16,250 fine against Westinghouse Electric Co. for violations of NRC safety requirements during decommissioning activities at the company's Hematite Fuel Manufacturing Facility in Festus, Mo.

The fine is proposed for two violations of requirements for assuring that uranium used in nuclear fuel processing is properly controlled and stored to preclude any accidental nuclear reaction. The violations were identified in an NRC inspection conducted from January through April.

The Hematite plant processed and fabricated fuel for nuclear power plants from 1974 until operations ceased in 2001. Westinghouse has been performing limited decommissioning activities at the site, including surveys and removal of processing equipment and piping, ventilation ducts, and other material contaminated with low-enriched uranium.

NRC inspectors found that components containing uranium residues were not properly analyzed before being stored and that the plant's procedures did not include necessary controls for handling and storing uranium-contaminated components.

"The NRC imposes strict requirements for surveying and storing equipment containing uranium fuel residues," said James Caldwell, NRC Regional Administrator. "Although Westinghouse failed to meet these requirements, our inspectors determined the possibility of an accidental nuclear reaction at the Hematite facility was very low."

Caldwell noted that since these violations were identified, Westinghouse has taken steps to correct the deficiencies and assure that uranium-contaminated equipment is properly evaluated and stored during decommissioning activities.

The company has until Sept. 26 to pay the fine or to protest it. If the fine is protested and subsequently imposed by the NRC staff, Westinghouse may request a hearing.

The letter and Notice of Violation issued to the company are available from the NRC's Region III Office of Public Affairs and will be posted on the NRC's web site at:
<http://www.nrc.gov/what-we-do/regulatory/enforcement/current.html#materials> .

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