



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC ISSUES CONFIRMATORY ACTION LETTER TO NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION LAB IN BOULDER, CO.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued a Confirmatory Action Letter to the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in Boulder, Co. confirming the licensee's commitment to provide a complete accounting of all licensed radioactive material, improve security practices and assess the adequacy of its radiation safety programs.

NOAA, which is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, holds an NRC license authorizing it to possess radioactive materials used in various devices for research purposes. An NRC inspector visited the facility on Oct. 8 and 9, with a follow-up inspection on Oct. 30 and 31, after officials reported the loss of three devices containing small quantities of radioactive material.

The NRC inspector interviewed workers, inspected records and reviewed the licensee's adherence to NRC regulations for the storage, handling, use and security of radioactive materials.

The inspectors identified examples of some research activities conducted outside the scope of the NRC license that involved small quantities of low hazard radioactive materials and some problems with inventory controls. Findings will be detailed in a written report to be made publicly available. Immediate actions to address security problems were implemented on Oct. 31.

Under the terms of the Confirmatory Action Letter, lab officials have agreed to provide a complete accounting of all licensed material and details of how it is being used; submit a license amendment requesting expanded authorization for the use of licensed radioactive material that addresses current research purposes; and assess the adequacy of the licensee's radiation safety program.

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