



NRC NEWS

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Office of Public Affairs, Region II
245 Peachtree Center Ave. NE, Suite 1200
Atlanta, GA 30303-1257
Web Site: www.nrc.gov

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CONTACT: Roger Hannah (404) 997-4417
Joey Ledford (404) 997-4416

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E-mail: OPA2@nrc.gov

NRC PROPOSES \$17,500 FINE AGAINST WESTINGHOUSE FOR VIOLATIONS AT COLUMBIA NUCLEAR FUEL PLANT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$17,500 civil penalty against Westinghouse Electric Company for violations of nuclear safety requirements at its commercial nuclear fuel plant in Columbia, S.C.

NRC officials said the proposed civil penalty is based on violations identified during an NRC review of a Jan. 24, 2010 event involving a spill inside the plant of about 200 gallons of wastewater containing ammonia and low levels of uranium.

The spill was the result of a pump failure and operators shut down the process after a few minutes. Plant employees cleaned the area, no workers were exposed to significant concentrations and no medical attention was needed.

The NRC discussed the apparent violations with Westinghouse officials at a Sept. 24 enforcement conference in Atlanta, and the company acknowledged the violations.

The NRC said there were no actual consequences as a result of the spill, but the potential consequences to the workers were significant. The NRC determined that a civil penalty of \$17,500 was warranted because the Westinghouse plant has been the subject of escalated enforcement by the NRC within the past two years.

NRC officials said the company has taken steps to preclude a recurrence of the problem and that Westinghouse has 30 days from receipt of the notification of the proposed civil penalty to pay it or to protest its imposition.

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