



NRC NEWS

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NRC BEGINS SPECIAL INSPECTION AT NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY'S RESEARCH REACTOR

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will begin a special inspection at North Carolina State University's (NCSU) research reactor facility in Raleigh, N.C. after the facility reported an unintended exposure of a staff member who was conducting radiography activities.

Although the estimated exposure dose of about 0.15 rem is significantly below the NRC occupational exposure limit of 5 rem, NCSU reported the reading to the NRC on Dec. 15. For perspective the exposure is about half of the annual dose in the United States from background or natural radiation.

The special inspection team, comprised of two NRC inspectors, will determine if the estimated exposure reading was accurate. The team will assess the circumstances surrounding the unintended exposure of the staff member by developing a sequence of events and activities. It will also review licensee records and the implementation of its radiation protection program, and look for other factors that may have caused the unintended exposure.

The special inspection is expected to be completed in two to three days. An inspection report will be issued and made public approximately 30 days following completion of the inspection.

NCSU's research reactor was licensed to operate in 1972 by the NRC's predecessor the Atomic Energy Commission.

Nuclear research and test reactors are designed and used for research, testing, and education in physics, chemistry, biology, anthropology, medicine, materials sciences, radiography and related fields. These reactors do not produce commercial electricity, but they help prepare people for nuclear-related careers in the fields of electric power, national defense, health services, research, and education. For more information about research and test reactors, visit the NRC website at <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/non-power.html>.

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