



NRC NEWS

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NRC PROPOSED \$3,250 FINE AGAINST MICHIGAN HOSPITAL FOR FAILURE TO PROPERLY SECURE RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$3,250 fine against Dickinson County Memorial Hospital, Iron Mountain, Mich., for failing to properly secure a medical device containing radioactive material while in storage.

In August 2007, the NRC conducted a routine inspection at Dickinson County Memorial Hospital. An NRC inspector found that a device containing radioactive material used for medical procedures was unsecured and unattended while in storage. NRC regulations require that NRC-licensed radioactive material be secured from unauthorized access or removal while in storage or unattended. As a result, the NRC issued a Notice of Violation to the hospital.

Dickinson County Memorial Hospital provided the NRC with a letter responding to the violation which included the hospital's proposed corrective actions to address the violation identified by the NRC.

During a follow-up inspection at the hospital in January 2008, the NRC inspector identified a similar violation. While no fine was proposed for the earlier incident, the NRC proposed a fine after the second violation occurred because the hospital's corrective actions did not prevent recurrence of the security issue.

"While no one actually had access to the radioactive material in this particular instance, the NRC requires that the hospital and its employees strictly adhere to good security practices to prevent unauthorized removal of the material," said James Caldwell, NRC Regional Administration. "This incident also shows how important it is to take a thorough approach to correcting problems to prevent their recurrence."

The hospital has taken extensive corrective actions to strengthen the security of radioactive materials.

The hospital has until June 6 to pay the fine or to protest it. If the fine is protested and subsequently imposed by the NRC staff, the hospital may request a hearing.

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