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NRC BEGINS SPECIAL INSPECTION OF DAMAGE
TO NUCLEAR GAUGE AT INDIANA FOUNDRY

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has begun a special inspection to review the circumstances surrounding the recent damage to a nuclear gauge at the DaimlerChrysler Indianapolis Foundry. The foundry, located at 1100 S. Tibbs Ave., Indianapolis, Ind., manufactures cast iron engine blocks.

The gauge was damaged when overheated during foundry operations in late July. The permanently mounted gauge, which contains a sealed radiation source of radioactive cesium, is used to measure the level of metal in foundry equipment. The overheating affected the lead shielding in the gauge, but does not appear to have damaged the radioactive material which is contained in a double-walled steel capsule inside the shielded gauge.

After the gauge was damaged, several workers may have received inadvertent radiation exposures while assessing the malfunction. No significant health consequences would be expected from these radiation exposures.

The damage was reported to the NRC on Wednesday, August 10. The gauge has been shut down, and access to the area surrounding the gauge is being controlled.

A team of three NRC inspectors arrived at the facility on Thursday afternoon. The inspectors are reviewing the gauge damage, evaluating the possible radiation exposures received by workers, and assessing the plans for removal and replacement of the gauge.

An report of the team's findings will be issued about 30 days after the completion of the inspection. The report will be available from the NRC's Region III Office of Public Affairs and in the NRC's online public document library at http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html – assistance in using the document library is available from the NRC Public Document Room staff at 800/397-4209.

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