



NRC NEWS

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NRC PROPOSES \$8,800 CIVIL PENALTY FOR PITTSBURGH MEDICAL FACILITY

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has proposed an \$8,800 fine against a Pittsburgh, Pa., medical facility for deliberately violating agency regulations pertaining to the possession and disposal of radioactive material.

Based on an inquiry conducted by the NRC's Office of Investigations, the agency has determined that the South Pittsburgh Cancer Center, located on Clairton Boulevard, possessed depleted uranium from January 1994 to December 1, 2000. The center did so even though the material, which was in the form of bricks used for shielding for two linear accelerators, was not listed on an NRC license, as required.

Further, the NRC has found that the center tried to dispose of the depleted uranium in April 1998 and October 2000 by transferring it to persons who did not have an NRC license authorizing them to possess radioactive material. For example, in the case of the April 1998 transfer, the material was handed over to a handyman. That individual attempted to dispose of the depleted uranium but was unable to do so after a radiation monitor alarmed at a disposal facility. The material was subsequently returned to the center.

In a letter to center owner/radiation safety officer Dr. Antonio J. Ambrad announcing the enforcement decision, NRC Region I Administrator Hubert J. Miller said the agency was particularly concerned that Ambrad had deliberately violated NRC requirements. "It is essential for the NRC to maintain the highest confidence that licensees and their employees will abide by requirements designed to protect the health and safety of the public," Mr. Miller wrote.

South Pittsburgh Cancer Center is required to submit a written response to the NRC within 30 days.

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