



# NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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## **NRC, VIRGINIA COMPANY TO DISCUSS APPARENT VIOLATION STEMMING FROM TEMPORARY LOSS OF NUCLEAR GAUGE**

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of an Ashburn, Va., engineering firm on Wednesday, June 29, to discuss an apparent violation of agency requirements involving the control and security of NRC-licensed radioactive materials. The apparent violation stems from the temporary loss of a portable nuclear gauge in December 2010 at the Fort George G. Meade Army Base, in Fort George Meade, Md.

The predecisional enforcement conference involving GeoConcepts Engineering, Inc., is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. in the Public Meeting Room at the NRC Region I Office, at 475 Allendale Road in King of Prussia, Pa. The conference will be open for public observation and there will be an opportunity for attendees to ask questions of NRC staff regarding the matter prior to adjournment.

On Dec. 2, 2010, GeoConcepts discovered that one of its portable nuclear gauges, which had been stored at a temporary job site at the Army base, had been removed during a suspected theft of construction equipment. The portable gauge contains a small amount of radioactive material and is used for such purposes as measuring soil density at construction sites. It was last seen on the afternoon of Nov. 29, 2010, and had been stored inside a lock-box and chained to the exterior of a sea-land container at the construction site. The NRC was notified of the missing portable gauge, as was the base police force.

On Dec. 10, 2010, GeoConcepts was notified by base police that they had recovered a locked portable gauge transport case with the company's name on it. Subsequent investigation determined it was the missing device.

During an NRC inspection performed in March and April 2011, the NRC determined that GeoConcepts did not – as required by NRC regulations – use a minimum of two independent physical controls to secure the portable gauge from unauthorized removal, when the device was not under the control and constant surveillance of company personnel.

The purpose of the June 29<sup>th</sup> Predecisional Enforcement Conference is for GeoConcepts to provide information that it wants the NRC to consider when determining what, if any, enforcement action is warranted. There will be an effort to come to a common understanding of the facts and a discussion of the root causes of the event and corrective actions undertaken by the company.

No decision on enforcement action will be made by the NRC staff at the session. Rather, NRC management will render a decision sometime in the near future.

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