

No: 17-022

May 11, 2017

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NRC Issues Annual Report on Abnormal Occurrences for FY 2016

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has released its annual report to Congress on abnormal occurrences for fiscal year 2016, citing one event at a fuel cycle facility, one event involving radiation exposure to an embryo or fetus, another involving radiation exposure to a radiographer, and eight medical events involving radioactive materials. The report details investigation of each incident by the NRC, state agencies and licensees, as well as measures taken to ensure such incidents do not recur.

An accident or event is considered an abnormal occurrence if it involves a major reduction in the degree of protection of public health and safety. Abnormal occurrences can include, but are not necessarily limited to, moderate exposure to or release of radioactive material licensed by the NRC or a state agency; major degradation of safety-related equipment; or major deficiencies in design, construction, use of, or management controls for facilities or radioactive material.

Three reported abnormal occurrences happened at NRC licensee facilities. These included the discovery of an excessive amount of low-enriched uranium in a scrubber at the Westinghouse Columbia Fuel Fabrication Facility in Columbia, S.C. The other two were medical events involving misadministration of radioactive material during cancer treatment.

Eight reported abnormal occurrences happened in Agreement States. (The NRC has agreements with 37 states under which the states regulate industrial and medical uses of radioactive materials.) One event involved an overexposure to an industrial worker performing radiography, one event resulted in an exposure to an embryo or fetus, and the other six were medical events. Abnormal occurrences represent a very small fraction of the average number of nuclear medicine and radiation therapy procedures conducted annually.

Three of the 11 events occurred in previous fiscal years and are included because the NRC completed its evaluation of these events in FY 2016.

The report on abnormal occurrences for fiscal year 2016 is published as NUREG-0090, Volume 39. It was transmitted to Congress on May 9 and is available on the [NRC website](#).