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Region III Office of Public Affairs
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NRC TO HOLD PREDECISIONAL ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCE
WITH U.S. ARMY

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet August 8 with representatives of the U.S. Army for a predecisional enforcement conference on apparent radiation safety program violations at several military installations in the United States.

The conference will start at 10 a.m. in the Third Floor Conference Room of the NRC Region III Office, 801 Warrenville Road, Lisle, Illinois. It is open to public observation. NRC officials will be available at its conclusion to answer questions from the press and other interested observers.

The discussion will focus on the Army's apparent failure to adequately manage its radiation safety programs at various military installations. The Army is licensed by the NRC to use radioactive material -- tritium, americium-241, and nickel-63 -- in such applications as self-luminous fire control devices (weapons sights), chemical agent detectors, and in chemical agent monitors.

NRC inspections identified apparent violations at several Army installations for, among other things, failing to: conduct requisite annual inspections, notify the NRC of radiological incidents, perform required tests, adequately secure material in storage, and provide appropriate training. As a result of NRC's inspection findings, a Confirmatory Order was issued on March 26. The Order detailed several commitments by the Army to correct program deficiencies. Many of the apparent violations were repetitive from NRC inspections conducted in 1992, 1993, and 1995.

The decision to hold an enforcement conference does not mean the NRC has determined that a violation has occurred or that enforcement action will be taken. Rather, the purpose is to discuss apparent violations, their causes and safety significance; to provide the licensee an opportunity to point out any errors that may have been made in the NRC inspection report; and to enable the company to outline its proposed corrective actions.

No decision on the apparent violations or any contemplated enforcement action, such as a fine, will be made at this conference. Those decisions will be made by senior NRC officials at a later date.

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