## U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION Region III Office of Public Affairs 801 Warrenville Road, Lisle, IL 60532-4351

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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$13,000 FINE AGAINST OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY;
DIRECTS OSU TO PROVIDE ASSURANCE OF FUTURE COMPLIANCE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$13,000 fine against Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, for violations of NRC radiation safety requirements in the university's research programs which use radioactive materials.

The university is also directed to provide assurances on future compliance with NRC regulations and to tell the NRC staff why the agency should not place the university under a more restrictive NRC license.

The violations were identified in three NRC inspections and an investigation by its Office of Investigations. They were conducted between June 1996 and May of this year.

These violations involve exceeding time limits for storage of radioactive waste, failing to make periodic inventories of radiation sources, failing to report lost or missing radioactive material or not reporting the loss promptly, and failing to properly secure packages containing radioactive material and laboratories where the material was used.

Some of the violations were similar to violations found in earlier NRC inspections. The NRC fined the university \$17,750 in June 1994.

The NRC investigation found that the problems had not been addressed because the university's radiation safety office did not have sufficient resources available.

NRC Regional Administrator A. Bill Beach, in notifying the university of the fine, said, "These failures are of significant safety and regulatory concern because of the potential for material to enter the public domain and affect public health and safety."

He added, "NRC relies on its licensees, particularly those with programs of the magnitude of OSU's, to conduct licensed activities with integrity."

In addition to the proposed fines, the NRC staff has issued a Demand for Information requiring the university to submit, within 60 days, the following information:

- 1. Why the NRC should not rescind the OSU broad scope license and issue in its place a limited, more restrictive license until NRC inspections demonstrate, over time, that OSU has the ability to manage a broad scope program.
- 2. Why the improvement plan developed after the 1994 violations failed to prevent further violations.
- 3. Why the NRC should conclude that OSU will comply with NRC requirements in the future, including assurances that adequate resources will be available, that known violations will be corrected, and that, if adequate resources are not available, the university will curtail its activities to assure compliance.

The NRC staff noted that the university was taking corrective actions to address the violations including additional staff and resources, disposal of 2,000 cubic feet of radioactive waste, and stricter controls over researchers.

The university has until November 24 to pay the fine or to protest it. If the fine is protested and subsequently imposed by the NRC staff, OSU may request a hearing.

Note: The text of the letter to the university and the notice of violation is available on the NRC's internet web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/reports

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