



# NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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## **NRC TO DISCUSS APPARENT VIOLATIONS AT GLOBAL NUCLEAR FUELS**

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled a meeting for Monday, May 19 to discuss apparent violations of NRC regulations associated with an Alert declared on Jan. 30 at the Global Nuclear Fuels facility in Wilmington, N.C.

The meeting, called a predecisional enforcement conference, is scheduled to begin at 1:00 p.m. in the NRC Region II Office on the 24<sup>th</sup> floor of the Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center, 61 Forsyth Street, SW, in Atlanta. It will be open to the public, and those in attendance will have an opportunity to ask questions of NRC staff before the end of the meeting.

The Alert, the lowest level of emergency classification at nuclear fuel facilities, was declared based on the potential for the introduction of moisture into a container holding uranium dioxide powder. Adding moisture to sufficient quantities of enriched uranium dioxide increases the possibility of a criticality event. A criticality event is an unanticipated nuclear reaction resulting in a release of radiation. In this particular case, there was no criticality and no actual health and safety impact to workers, people living nearby or the environment, but the NRC initiated a special inspection to look into causes leading to the event.

NRC inspectors identified four apparent violations during the special inspection in late January and early February, and during follow-up reviews and telephone conversations. The apparent violations were in the areas of maintaining double contingency control, emergency level declaration, approved procedures for maintenance activities, and approval by the criticality safety function of maintenance activities.

The purpose of the May 19 conference is to discuss the apparent violations and provide the company an opportunity to respond and to provide details of its corrective actions and other additional information to enable the NRC to determine what, if any, enforcement action is warranted.

No enforcement decision will be made by the NRC staff at the conference. Agency managers will make a decision following a review of information from the enforcement conference and final evaluation of the apparent violations.

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