



# NRC NEWS

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## NRC BEGINS SPECIAL INSPECTION AT RHODE ISLAND ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION RESEARCH REACTOR

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has begun a special inspection at the Rhode Island Atomic Energy Commission's research reactor, following a reported potential radiation overexposure of one of its workers.

The Rhode Island research reactor reported the potential overexposure on Oct. 25 ([event report # 47375](#) will be available on the NRC website) in which an employee entered the facility's dry gamma exposure room to calibrate a radiation probe as part of an experiment the facility was conducting.

The licensee indicated that based on its staff estimates, the employee received approximately 2.5 rem (about half of the annual regulatory limit of 5 rem) total effective dose equivalent and estimated that radiation dose rate in the room was approximately 30 rem per hour. The circumstances meet the criteria for conducting a special inspection. The area was posted as a high radiation area and the reactor was shut down at the time and remains secured. The licensee's investigation is ongoing.

Since the event report, the actual dose measured 0.115 rem – significantly lower than originally estimated.

NRC inspectors are on-site responding to this event at the research facility and they will stay on to lead the special inspection. The inspectors will seek to understand the circumstances surrounding the event and its probable causes, including conditions preceding the event, chronology, equipment performance, precursors, human factors considerations, quality assurance considerations and radiological considerations.

A written report of the special inspection will be issued about 30 days following the completion of the inspection. It will be available on the NRC website. The NRC's predecessor, the Atomic Energy Commission, originally licensed the Rhode Island Atomic Energy Commission Research Reactor to operate in 1964.

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