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NRC PROPOSES \$3,000 FINE AGAINST WASHINGTON, D.C. HOSPITAL

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has cited Howard University Hospital in Washington, D.C., for a violation involving a personnel contamination at the facility. The NRC has proposed a \$3,000 fine.

On March 18-19 and April 10, an NRC inspector conducted a safety inspection at the hospital. In the course of that review, the inspector performed a confirmatory radiological survey in areas where licensed nuclear medicine materials are used. This survey was performed after hospital employees had already completed their own end-of-day survey. The NRC inspector discovered eight areas of contamination, which created the potential for radiological exposure to patients, workers and others above regulatory limits. The inspector also determined there were deficiencies in the way the hospital's surveys were conducted. Subsequent surveys by the hospital's radiation safety staff also found areas of contamination.

A predecisional enforcement conference was held on June 4 to discuss the inspection findings, the violation, its causes and the hospital's corrective actions.

Based on the information developed during the conference, the inspection and in an April 23 letter, the NRC has determined that one violation of NRC requirements occurred.

In a letter to the hospital forwarding the notice of violation, Region I Administrator Hubert J. Miller wrote that the violation is of concern because "the failure to conduct appropriate surveys of radioactive material resulted in a missed opportunity to identify contamination in your facilities and of one of your employees. If undetected, this contamination could have resulted in substantial unintended radiation dose to the individual."

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The NRC also noted in the letter that Howard University Hospital had taken prompt and comprehensive corrective action including obtaining appropriate equipment and supplies for technologists and training nuclear medicine technologists.

Howard University Hospital has 30 days to respond to the notice of violation.

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