

National Nuclear Security Administration Fact Sheet

Preliminary Notice of Violation: Occupational Radiation Protection Violations at Sandia National Laboratories

On October 16, 2026, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) issued a Preliminary Notice of Violation (PNOV) to National Technology and Engineering Solutions of Sandia, LLC (NTESS) for failure to comply with Department of Energy (DOE) occupational radiation protection requirements. NTESS is the management and operating contractor to DOE's NNSA Sandia National Laboratories located in Albuquerque, NM.

The PNOV notes a failure to comply with DOE occupational radiation protection requirements established at 10 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) Part 835, Occupational Radiation Protection. The violations are associated with a small number of workers receiving unplanned radiation doses during a June 5, 2024, experimental tritium shot at the Z Machine, which is located at Sandia National Laboratories. The doses were low and are being appropriately monitored; however, changes in radiation levels were not adequately anticipated or detected.

NNSA identified three Level II violations in the areas of: (1) adherence to written procedures, (2) detecting changes in radiological conditions, and subsequent (3) causal analysis and corrective action.

NNSA proposes a civil penalty of \$353,000 based on the safety significance of the violations and in consideration of mitigation based on prior withheld fee.

Section 234A of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, authorizes the NNSA to take regulatory actions under 10 C.F.R. Part 820, *Procedural Rules for DOE Nuclear Activities*, for violations by NNSA contractors of DOE nuclear safety requirements. DOE's enforcement program encourages contractors to identify and correct nuclear safety deficiencies at an early stage, before they contribute to, or result in more serious safety events.

Ensuring the health and safety of our workforce, contractors, and the public is a core NNSA value and the NNSA enforces strict occupational radiation dose limits mandated by federal law. Though unplanned, the doses received by employees during the Z Machine experiments were within permissible occupational dose limits for workers. Since 2024, Sandia has made changes to strengthen worker protection, including moving some operations to remote locations and updating evacuation procedures and radiation monitoring requirements. NNSA has validated these steps to protect worker safety and health at the Z Machine and continues to work with NTESS to identify potential additional worker protections.

Additional details on this and other enforcement actions are available on the DOE website at <http://energy.gov/ea/services/enforcement>.

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