WHAT IS THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION?

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is an independent Federal regulatory agency responsible for overseeing the safe operation of nuclear power plants and other commercial uses of radioactive materials.

WHAT DOES THE NRC DO?

The NRC’s primary responsibility is to ensure that the public and the environment are protected from the potential impacts of nuclear power plants, including the safe storage and disposal of nuclear waste.

WHAT RESPONSIBILITY DOES MY EMPLOYER HAVE?

Any company that conducts activities licensed by the NRC must comply with the NRC’s requirements. If a company violates NRC requirements, it can be fined or have its license modified, suspended, or revoked.

WHAT IS MY RESPONSIBILITY?

For your own protection and the protection of your co-workers, you should know your NRC responsibilities. It is your responsibility to work within the limits of your training and to report any violations or safety concerns.

WHAT IF I CAUSE A VIOLATION?

If you caused a violation, the NRC will consider the circumstances surrounding your report in determining the appropriate enforcement action, if any.

HOW DO I REPORT VIOLATIONS AND SAFETY CONCERNS?

If you believe that you have been discriminated against for bringing violations or safety concerns, you may file a complaint with the NRC. The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), or appropriate state entities. You receive a personal remedy, a complaint may be filed with the DOL pursuant to Section 211 of the ERA or with appropriate state entities. Your complaint must describe in detail the basis for the belief that the employer discriminated against you on the basis of your protected activity, and must be filed within 180 days of the date of the discriminatory action or the date you received knowledge of such discrimination.

CAN I BE FIRED FOR RAISING A SAFETY CONCERN?

Federal law prohibits an employer from firing or otherwise discriminating against you for bringing safety concerns to the attention of your employer or the NRC. You may not be fired or discriminated against because you engage in certain protected activities, including but not limited to:

- asking the NRC to enforce its rules against your employer;
- refusing to engage in activities which violate NRC requirements;
- providing information or preparing to provide information to the NRC or your employer about violations of requirements or safety concerns; or
- asking for, or testifying, helping, or taking part in an NRC, Congressional, or any Federal or State proceeding.

WHAT FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION ARE PROHIBITED?

It is unlawful for an employer to fire or discriminate against you with respect to pay, benefits, or working conditions because you help the NRC or anyone else to monitor violations or other conduct that you believe is harmful to safety. Violations of the Energy Reorganization Act (ERA) of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5815) include: (a) refusal to provide information to the NRC, (b) employees who bring safety concerns directly to their employers or to the NRC or (c) employees who bring safety concerns directly to the NRC or to the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission Regional Office.

WHAT WILL THE NRC DO?

The NRC will evaluate each allegation of harassment, intimidation, or discrimination to determine whether sufficient information is provided to initiate NRC investigation. To assist in this evaluation, an investigator from the NRC’s Office of Investigations (IO) may interview you and gather any applicable documentation in your possession. If the NRC determines that the allegation falls within its purview, the NRC will close its investigation without further action. The NRC will close its investigation of any allegations that are not within its purview. If an acceptable settlement is not reached, the NRC will initiate an investigation.

MAY I REQUEST AN INSPECTION?

Yes. If you believe that you have been discriminated against for bringing violations or safety concerns to the NRC or your employer, you may file a complaint with the NRC, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), or appropriate state entities. You receive a personal remedy, a complaint may be filed with the DOL pursuant to Section 211 of the ERA or with appropriate state entities. Your complaint must describe in detail the basis for the belief that the employer discriminated against you on the basis of your protected activity, and must be filed within 180 days of the date of the discriminatory action or the date you received knowledge of such discrimination.

HOW DO I CONTACT THE NRC?

You may contact the NRC staff at the Regional Office nearest you for re- porting safety concerns. The addresses for the NRC Regional Offices and the telephone numbers are also listed below. You can also file a complaint with the NRC Regional Office.

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WHAT CAN THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR DO?

If your complaint involves a violation of Section 211 of the ERA by your employer, the DOL provides a process for obtaining a personal remedy. The DOL will notify your employer that a complaint has been filed and will investigate your complaint. If the DOL finds that your employer has unlawfully discriminated against you, it may order that you be reinstated, receive back pay, or be compensated for any injury suffered as a result of the discrimination and be paid attorney’s fees and court costs. Relief will not be awarded to employees who engage in deliberate violations of the Energy Reorganization Act or the Atomic Energy Act.

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