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## **DOE Cites University of Chicago for Nuclear Safety Violations**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – The Department of Energy (DOE) today issued a Preliminary Notice of Violation (PNOV) to the University of Chicago (University), the Management and Operating contractor for DOE's Argonne National Laboratory (ANL), for nuclear safety violations identified through several safety reviews and inspections conducted by DOE.

A series of reviews and inspections, the most recent of which occurred in 2005, identified breakdowns in the contractor's quality improvement, radiation protection, work process, and independent and management assessment programs. Prior to 2005, senior contractor management at ANL failed to adequately comply with DOE's nuclear safety regulations that govern these programs. DOE's investigation of the safety review findings found that these issues have existed for a number of years, and the University's efforts to correct these problems were largely ineffective.

The identified deficiencies have not caused significant radiation exposures or other nuclear safety incidents. However, DOE noted in a letter to the ANL that it was simply fortuitous that no harm had occurred to ANL staff, given the breadth and duration of the identified violations.

Last year, the University appointed a new management team at ANL and has given the new lab director the resources and support necessary to upgrade the nuclear safety program. The new director has already begun to take corrective actions and initiated others to address other problems, including the implementation of a new safety program infrastructure.

The PNOV includes a proposed civil penalty of \$550,000 for the identified violations. This penalty, however, is waived by statute for the University. DOE indicated in its letter to the director of ANL that while the enforcement action would normally have been much more severe given the number and duration of the violations, enforcement discretion was being exercised in recognition of the significant corrective actions already taken by the director and the new management team.

The Price-Anderson Amendments Act of 1988 authorizes DOE to undertake regulatory actions against contractors for violations of its nuclear safety requirements. The enforcement program encourages DOE contractors to identify and correct nuclear safety deficiencies at an early stage before they contribute to or result in more serious events.

Additional details on this and other enforcement actions are available at:  
<http://www.eh.doe.gov/enforce>.

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