

Energy Department Fines Y-12 Contractor \$1,045,000 for Nuclear Safety Violations

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WASHINGTON, DC The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has cited Lockheed Martin Energy Systems (LMES), operator of its Y-12 site in Oak Ridge, Tenn., for multiple violations of nuclear safety requirements. The proposed civil penalty of \$1,045,000 would be the largest since the department's Nuclear Safety Enforcement Program began in 1994 under the requirements of the Price-Anderson Amendments Act.

The enforcement action was issued by John Gordon, Administrator of DOE's National Nuclear Security Administration, upon the recommendation of Dr. David Michaels, Assistant Secretary for Environment, Safety and Health. It follows an investigation by DOE's Office of Enforcement in conjunction with the Oak Ridge Operations Office.

"The Price Anderson Enforcement Program is an important tool that we can use to assure that our contractors are fully accountable for safety," said the Administrator.

The Energy Department's investigation was initiated in January 2000 and determined that violations took place in the following areas:

- The December 8, 1999, explosion of sodium potassium liquid metal in the Alpha 5 Facility that resulted in injury to 11 workers. Violations involved the contractor's failure to identify and mitigate the explosive hazards associated with this material, despite a number of opportunities to do so. As a result, workers were not properly trained for the work and were not aware of its hazards;
- Violations of criticality safety requirements and work process controls which resulted in a DOE-ordered operational stand down on November 5, 1999, and curtailment of fissile material movements in Building 9212 on December 14, 1999;
- Significant deficiencies in the design, procurement and fabrication of the Hydrogen Fluoride Supply System, a critical system required for resumption of enriched uranium operations. The investigation identified failures with virtually every phase of the project including vendor qualification, configuration management, vendor oversight, tube and supply line welding, inspection and acceptance testing of welds and system components, system turnover and operations; and
- Numerous examples of violations occurring during the period July 1998 to December 1999 involving failure to adhere to Operational Safety Requirements and other Authorization Basis requirements.

Similar deficiencies were identified by the Defense Nuclear Facility Safety Board as early as 1994. In response to these findings and the LMES commitment to make wide-ranging and significant corrective actions, DOE elected to defer regulatory sanctions in order to avoid any

possibility of taking attention away from important safety upgrades.

DOE determined that no mitigation of the Price-Anderson penalty would be warranted for timely self-identification and reporting nor for adequacy of corrective actions.

Corrective actions have been taken by LMES in recent months, including replacement of some senior managers and a restructuring designed to make nuclear safety quality assurance more integrated into facility activities. Other commitments made by LMES include effective management involvement, strong coordination of the various Y-12 organizational elements involved, full implementation of the corrective actions, and timely, thorough monitoring of the effectiveness of these corrective actions.

The notice will become final September 23, 30 days after the Preliminary Notice of Violation, unless LMES provides sufficient justification and information to rebut the findings of the enforcement action.

A copy of the violation is available on the Internet at: <http://www.eh.doe.gov/enforce>.

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