U.S.NRC
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
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NRC NEWS
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No. I-16-025 July 29, 2016

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NRC Proposes $7,000 Fine Against New Jersey Company for Violations at San Francisco Shipyard

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has cited Tetra Tech EC, Inc., for an apparent violation of NRC requirements that occurred at the U.S. Navy's Hunter's Point Naval Shipyard site in California. The agency has proposed a $7,000 fine.

Hunter's Point is being remediated under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, with Environmental Protection Agency oversight. Tetra Tech was contracted by the Department of the Navy to assist with the regulatory free-release and closure of the radiologically-impacted buildings and sites at the shipyard, under the Navy's Base Realignment and Closure mandate. The NRC has jurisdiction over the northeast portion of the shipyard. NRC oversight involves ensuring that contractors with NRC service provider licenses, such as Tetra Tech, are conducting remediation activities safely. NRC is not overseeing the decommissioning of the site.

The Navy identified discrepancies in the soil sample survey data and Tetra Tech conducted an investigation to identify the inaccurate records. After the company reported the discrepancies to the NRC, an NRC investigation was conducted, which determined that two Tetra Tech workers, who worked within NRC jurisdiction, deliberately falsified soil samples on a number of occasions in late 2011 through the summer of 2012. When tasked with obtaining soil samples to ascertain the amount of residual radioactivity in certain locations within Parcel C, the workers instead obtained soil samples from other areas that were suspected to be less contaminated and then created documents indicating the work had been done as expected. The company has since taken actions to prevent recurrence.

Tetra Tech has been issued a notice of violation for failing to make surveys within Parcel C that were reasonable to evaluate concentrations of residual radioactivity in the soil.

"Although the NRC investigation did not find information to suggest buildings, land or materials were inappropriately released for unrestricted use, the failure to perform reasonable surveys is a significant concern because that potential did exist," said Region I Administrator Dan Dorman.

Tetra Tech is not required to respond to the notice of violation because the company has already provided information on the reason for the violation and the actions taken to prevent recurrence. The company has 30 days to pay the proposed civil penalty or to request in writing that all or part of it be withdrawn.