

Rocky Flats Contractor Cited for Failing to Correct Nuclear Safety Violations

For Immediate Release
Release Date: January 31, 2000

WASHINGTON, DC The Department of Energy (DOE) has issued a second civil penalty to Kaiser-Hill Company, LLC, operator of the department's Rocky Flats Environmental Technology site in Colorado, for failure to adequately implement aggressive corrective actions it had committed to as part of an enforcement action last year

This \$55,000 fine follows an \$82,500 civil penalty issued in August 1999 to Kaiser-Hill for problems with its procurement processes in 1997 and 1998. In that case, DOE found that the contractor purchased 69 defective nuclear waste containers without adequately evaluating the quality controls used by the supplier, citing several failures to properly follow administrative controls and procedures.

At the time of last year's action, the department said that it would defer enforcement action on additional similar violations provided that Kaiser-Hill made effective corrective actions that would prevent recurrence of the problems. However, a DOE review found continued procurement-related problems that should have been avoided by the previous corrective actions. For example, in September 1999, workers identified quality problems with garments used to protect them from radioactive contamination. Kaiser-Hill again presented plans to resolve issues, including consolidation of all previous prior action plans into a comprehensive plan, establishment of a procurement review team to evaluate and approve procurement requests for services, and assignment of a dedicated senior floor manager to monitor receiving and inspection activities.

DOE has again determined that these actions, if fully implemented, would be appropriate. The penalty announced today was issued because of the contractor's initial failure to take corrective actions, which had been the basis for deferring enforcement action at the time, and to emphasize the importance of fully implementing commitments made to resolve nuclear safety problems.

The civil penalty accompanies a Preliminary Notice of Violation which again requires the contractor to take appropriate and effective corrective actions to be validated by the Rocky Flats Field Office. The department will then determine whether further enforcement action is required. The notice will become final in 30 days unless the contractor provides sufficient justification and information to rebut the findings of the enforcement action. The Preliminary Notice of Violation which provides detailed information is available via the Internet at: <http://www.eh.doe.gov/enforce>.

News Media Contact:
Jeff Sherwood, 202/586-5806

Release No. R-00-023