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NRC Issues Order to Honeywell to Address Discrimination Concerns

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued a confirmatory order to Honeywell International, Inc., requiring new training, communications, policies and guidance following an incident in which a contractor for the company terminated an employee, allegedly in part because the employee reported smelling alcohol on a supervisor's breath while on duty.

The apparent violation stemming from the incident resulted in Honeywell's request for an Alternative Dispute Resolution session. The ADR process uses a neutral mediator with no decision-making authority to assist the NRC and its licensees in reaching an agreement when there are differences regarding an enforcement action. An ADR session conducted on Dec. 9, 2014, resulted in an agreement for the NRC to issue an order outlining corrective actions to be taken by Honeywell.

As part of the agreement, the NRC refrained from issuing a Notice of Violation or proposing a civil penalty against Honeywell, and Honeywell neither admitted nor denied that a violation occurred.

The process stemmed from an NRC investigation into whether a Honeywell contractor, Bluestone, LLC, terminated one of its employees at the Honeywell Metropolis Works in Metropolis, Ill., after the employee informed both Bluestone and Honeywell of a safety concern, namely that the employee had smelled alcohol on the breath of an immediate supervisor onsite during duty hours. Bluestone is no longer a Honeywell contractor.

Under the terms of the order, some of which also apply to two other Honeywell facilities, the company has agreed to have its senior managers conduct presentations to advise employees about the company's policies encouraging the reporting of employee concerns. The company will also present training on the issue and will modify processes providing for ongoing management support for employee protection requirements. In addition, the company will review and update its Safety Conscious Work Environment Policy and incorporate applicable aspects of NRC's Safety Culture Policy as appropriate.