

Summary: USGS Staff Did not Immediately Inform Their Supervisors About NRC Violations

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The OIG investigated an allegation that U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) senior leaders may not have been forthcoming to the USGS Director about their knowledge of violations identified by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). In 2018, the NRC issued the USGS a civil penalty for infractions identified during an inspection of a USGS test reactor facility. Reportedly, USGS senior leaders denied they had any knowledge of the matter at the time, and the USGS requested the OIG's assistance in determining whether information had been communicated to them by their staff.

We did not find evidence showing that senior leaders withheld information on the issue. We did find that for approximately 1 month, the two staff members involved corresponded exclusively with one another and the NRC about the violations before informing their superiors and others at the USGS in mid-October 2018. One of the staff members subsequently left the Department and the other changed positions.

This is a summary of an investigative report we issued to the USGS Director.

