

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Public Affairs
Washington, DC 20555
Phone 301-415-8200 Fax 301-415-2234
Internet:opa@nrc.gov

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NRC REMOVES NEW JERSEY
PROPERTY FROM LIST OF CONTAMINATED SITES

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has removed the RTI, Inc., facility in Rockaway, New Jersey, from a special list of sites contaminated with radioactive material.

RTI, formerly known as Radiation Technology Incorporated, was licensed from 1970 until 1996 to operate a Cobalt-60 irradiator on the site. In April 1996, SteriGenics International notified NRC that it planned to lease the irradiator from RTI. NRC issued a new license to SteriGenics for the Rockaway facility on August 8, but contaminated areas on the site remained under a separate NRC license to RTI.

NRC has now terminated the RTI license, since the areas of concern have been satisfactorily cleaned up. The site has been removed from the Site Decommissioning Management Plan, which identifies about 50 sites throughout the United States that are contaminated with radioactive materials and warrant special attention.

The license issued to SteriGenics for operation of the irradiator will continue in force, and the facility will be inspected regularly by the NRC. The irradiator produces high-intensity radiation for the sterilization of disposable medical supplies and, to a much lesser extent, cosmetics, hospital supplies, pharmaceuticals, spices and food containers. Irradiation services are supplied principally to manufacturers whose products are prepackaged for irradiation before delivery to the Rockaway site.

The facility's Cobalt-60 radiation sources are stored in a pool of water for shielding when not in use. In addition, the facility is surrounded by a shield of reinforced concrete.

RTI disposed of solid radioactive waste in the late 1970s by burial on site. Soil surrounding the burial areas was also contaminated with Cobalt-60. In addition, methods used to clean the water pool used to store the sources resulted in Cobalt-60 contamination of the ground near the irradiator building.

The licensee conducted cleanup activities at the site from 1987 through 1995. Radiological surveys performed by the company in 1996 showed that the previously contaminated areas now meet NRC release criteria. Confirmatory surveys by NRC verified that the areas of concern at the facility meet NRC guidelines for unrestricted release.

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