



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

801 Warrenville Road

Lisle IL 60532

Web Site: <http://www.nrc.gov>

No. III-04-039

June 21, 2004

CONTACT: Jan Strasma (630)829-9663

E-mail: OPA3@nrc.gov

Viktorija Mitlyng (630)829-9662

NRC PROPOSES \$19,200 FINE AGAINST U.S. INSPECTION SERVICES FOR A RADIATION OVEREXPOSURE TO WORKER

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$19,200 fine against U.S. Inspection Services, Dayton, Ohio, for violations involving radiation overexposure to a worker at a temporary job site in West Virginia.

The company uses radiography cameras containing a radiation source for industrial applications, such as identifying flaws in pipe welds. Radiography is a non-destructive testing method that uses a sealed radiation source to make x-ray-like images of heavy metal objects such as pumps, valves and pipes.

On September 11, 2003, the U.S. Inspection Services notified the NRC that an employee using a radiography camera with a sealed radiation source on September 9 received a radiation dose of about 20 rem. The NRC annual limit for radiation workers is 5 rem (a rem is a standard unit of radiation dose).

The NRC conducted inspections into the circumstances of the incident and held a predecisional enforcement conference with the U.S. Inspection Services to discuss apparent violations of NRC requirements and actions taken by the company to prevent recurrence. NRC inspectors concluded that the overexposure occurred when a radiographer failed to ensure that the camera's radiation source had returned to its shielded position and conduct proper surveys of the radiography camera following a radiographic exposure.

The NRC staff identified seven violations of NRC regulations associated with the overexposure event based on inspection findings and information provided during the conference. Inspectors concluded that the root cause of the event was the company's inadequate management oversight of radiographic equipment operation and maintenance activities.

"This event would not have occurred had personnel employed by U.S. Inspection Services complied with the regulatory requirements and the licensee's procedures," writes James L. Caldwell, regional administrator of the NRC Region III office in Lisle, Ill., in his letter to the company.

The company has taken corrective actions to address the issues identified by the NRC.

The company has until July 15 to either pay the fine or to protest it. If the fine is protested and subsequently imposed by the NRC staff, the company may request a hearing.

###