



NRC NEWS

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NRC PROPOSES \$3,250 FINE FOR VIOLATION ASSOCIATED WITH THEFT OF NUCLEAR GAUGE FROM SOUTHFIELD, MICH., FIRM

The U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has proposed a \$3,250 fine against Tyme Engineering, Inc., of Southfield, Mich., for failing to properly secure a nuclear moisture-density gauge which was stolen in September 2007.

The gauge contained sealed radiation sources of americium-241 and cesium-137. Such gauges are used at construction sites to measure the moisture content and compaction of soil and foundation materials.

NRC inspectors determined that a Tyme Engineering employee had not properly secured the gauge in the bed of a pickup truck parked at the company's facility on Sept. 15, 2007. The gauge was discovered to be missing on Sept. 18.

"The NRC considers the loss of licensed material significant," said Regional Administrator James Caldwell, in notifying the company of the fine. "The loss of the gauge could result in unintended radiation doses to members of the public if the sealed sources are moved from the locked and shielded position."

NRC regulations require that such gauges be secured by a minimum of two independent security systems. The Tyme Engineering employee, however, failed to follow NRC requirements and company procedures and used a single chain to secure the gauge's case to the truck bed. In addition, the company's policies require the gauge to be placed in a locked storage room when not in use.

The stolen gauge has not been recovered. The radiation sources were locked inside the gauge in a safe, shielded position, and the case itself was also locked. The gauge does not represent a safety hazard unless the device is tampered with and the radiation sources exposed.

Tyme Engineering has until Feb. 6 to 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.

The letter notifying the company of the fine and the Notice of Violation are available on the NRC's web site at:

<http://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/regulatory/enforcement/current.html#materials>

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