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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NRC ISSUES ORDER SUSPENDING LICENSE OF CONNECTICUT GAUGE USER

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has issued an order suspending the byproduct materials license of Special Testing Laboratories, Inc. The order is effective immediately.

Special Testing Laboratories in Bethel, Conn., is authorized to possess and use portable nuclear density gauges. Richard Speciale is the company's president and radiation safety officer. The license was previously issued to Testwell Craig Laboratories of Connecticut, Inc., but was suspended in July 1996 because of non-payment of fees. Mr. Speciale was also the president of Testwell Craig.

In October and November an NRC inspector and investigator conducted an inspection at Special Testing Laboratories. They determined that portable gauges were routinely used by some employees who had not received the required training and some employees were using the gauges without wearing the required personnel radiation monitoring devices (dosimetry) and leak tests of the gauges were not being performed at the required frequency.

During the November visit, the inspector and investigator determined that Mr. Speciale had provided information to the NRC regarding the number of gauges being used, and the number of users and their training that he knew was not complete and accurate. In addition, Mr. Speciale admitted that he had never stopped using the nuclear gauges after the Testwell Craig license was suspended.

In the order, NRC Deputy Executive Director for Regulatory Effectiveness, Malcolm R. Knapp, said, "Deliberately violating NRC requirements is significant because the NRC must be able to rely on the integrity of licensee employees to comply with NRC requirements." He said providing false information to the NRC is

of significant concern because the Commission "must be able to rely on its licensees to provide complete and accurate information."

Dr. Knapp said it appears the licensee is "either unwilling or unable to comply with the Commission's requirements."

The order requires that the company suspend all activities under its NRC license, place all NRC-licensed material in locked storage, not receive any NRC-licensed material while the order is in effect, maintain all records in their original form, inform all employees of the order within two days, provide the NRC with a list of clients and post the order at the facility within 24 hours.

The licensee or any other person adversely affected by the order may request a hearing within 20 days. A request for a hearing shall not stay the immediate effectiveness of this order.

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