



NRC NEWS

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No. III-02-034

June 14, 2002

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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$7,500 FINE AGAINST WISCONSIN RAPIDS FIRM FOR LOSING A FIXED GAUGE WITH RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$7,500 fine against Stora Enso North America Corporation, Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, for losing control of a gauge containing a sealed radiation source and inadvertently shipping it to China.

The company sold certain equipment installed at its Wisconsin paper mill to a paper mill in China. In December of last year, two contract workers hired to dismantle the equipment removed the density gauge, which was not included in the sale, and shipped it to China, along with intended equipment. The gauge, which contained around 200 millicuries of Cesium-137, was discovered missing during a quarterly inventory on January 15.

A company representative traveled to China on January 31 and found the gauge still attached to the equipment. The gauge was locked in a secure, shielded position. As such, it did not represent a safety hazard. The gauge will remain in a secure location until arrangements for its safe return to Stora Enso's facility in Wisconsin Rapids are finalized.

The NRC conducted an inspection into the circumstances of the incident and held a predecisional enforcement conference with Stora Enso to discuss apparent violations of NRC requirements identified during the inspection, their significance, root causes and the company's corrective actions.

The NRC staff identified three violations of federal regulations based on inspection findings and information provided during the conference: (1) failure to control and maintain constant surveillance of radioactive material; (2) failure to clearly label the gauge; and (3) failure to ensure that the gauge was removed by persons licensed to do such work.

The company has 30 days from the receipt of the Notice of Violation 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.

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