



NRC NEWS

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NRC PROPOSES \$3,000 FINE AGAINST NORTHERN ENGRAVING FOR THE LOSS OF CONTROL OVER STATIC ELIMINATORS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$3,000 fine against Northern Engraving Corporation, Sparta, Wisconsin, for the improper transfer of a static elimination device containing a sealed radiation source.

On January 17, the NRC asked Northern Engraving to provide information about any generally licensed devices currently or formerly in its possession. In its March 13 response, Northern Engraving erroneously reported that it did not possess any generally licensed devices.

However, on April 10, Northern Engraving transferred a static eliminator from its Sparta, Wisconsin, facility, containing radioactive americium-241, to an aluminum scrap hauler. The device was subsequently transferred to a scrap processor, where it set off radiation detectors. A survey of the device for removable contamination indicated that a small amount of americium-241 was present but presented no health hazard to the public. The hauler had slightly damaged the device's radioactive material surface when he removed a protective grid before transporting the static eliminator to the scrap processor.

After the device was returned to Northern Engraving, the company transferred it to the manufacturer, as is provided for by federal regulation.

The NRC conducted inspections into the circumstances of the incident and held a predecisional enforcement conference with Northern Engraving to discuss apparent violations of NRC requirements and to prevent recurrence of the violations.

The NRC staff identified two violations of federal regulations based on inspection findings and information provided during the conference: (1) failure to transfer generally licensed devices only to authorized recipients; and (2) failure to provide complete and accurate information to the NRC.

The company has until August 21 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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