

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NRC STAFF SUSPENDS RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS LICENSE
OF EASTERN TESTING AND INSPECTION, INC, OF THOROFARE, NEW JERSEY

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued an order suspending a license to use radioactive materials held by Eastern Testing and Inspection, Inc., (ETI) of Thorofare, New Jersey. The order is effective immediately.

ETI holds two NRC licenses. One authorizes the company to possess and use iridium-192 and cobalt-60 sealed radiography sources for use in a radiographic source exposure device. The license was last renewed on December 16, 1994, and expires on December 31, 1999. A second license, authorizing the use of portable gauges, was issued on May 23, 1991, and expires on May 31, 1996.

The order requires that: all NRC-licensed material in the possession of the company be placed in locked storage, all activities authorized by the company's NRC license be suspended, no NRC-licensed material be received while the order is in effect, and all records related to licensed activities be maintained in their original form.

An NRC investigation found that ETI deliberately used an employee, with no prior radiography experience, to perform radiography one day after he was hired, even though the individual had not received the required training. Investigators determined that ETI president, Himat Soni, and company radiation safety officer Joseph Badiali, deliberately created inaccurate records certifying that the employee had been adequately trained and was authorized to perform the duties of a radiographer.

Further, investigators found that on September 29, 1995, Himat Soni threatened a former employee with physical harm, based on the belief that the former employee may have cooperated with an NRC investigation and/or inspection of ETI.

In addition, the investigator found that ETI personnel did not complete utilization records on 97 occasions between January 1, 1994 and August 31, 1995, in violation of NRC requirements.

(more)

NRC inspections on May 24, July 11 and 13, and August 1, 2 and 23, 1995, found an additional 11 violations of NRC requirements.

A follow-up NRC inspection on March 14, 1996, concluded that the licensee deliberately falsified documents of radiographer examinations and documented other violations.

In the order, James Lieberman, Director, Office of Enforcement, said, "The actions of the licensee and its senior officials have raised serious doubt as to whether the licensee and its employees can be relied upon in the future to comply with NRC requirements and to maintain complete and accurate records of licensed activities."

He went on to say he lacked the required reasonable assurance that the licensee's current operations would be conducted "in compliance with the Commission's requirements and that the health and safety of the public, including the Licensee's employees, will be protected."

The licensee, or any other person adversely affected by the order, has 20 days to request a hearing.

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