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## NRC ISSUES LETTER TO SPEC CONFIRMING SUSPENSION OF FABRICATION OF PACKAGES FOR TRANSPORTATION OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued a Confirmatory Action Letter to Source Production and Equipment Co., Inc. (SPEC), holder of three NRC certificates of compliance for packages used to transport radioactive materials. The letter confirms that SPEC will immediately suspend fabrication of all NRC-certified transportation packages and take certain other actions.

During a June 16-19 inspection at SPEC's facility in St. Rose, Louisiana, the NRC identified a problem regarding the method used by the company to conduct one of the tests required by the Commission's regulations to show ability of the packages to withstand hypothetical accident conditions. The test of concern is designed to demonstrate that a package can withstand a puncture test when it is dropped 40 inches, in a position for which maximum damage is expected, onto the end of a vertical steel bar mounted on an essentially unyielding, horizontal surface.

The NRC's concern involved SPEC's failure to properly mount the steel puncture bar on the test pad. The NRC is also concerned that the company's quality assurance program did not disclose the problem.

The letter to SPEC confirms that the company's suspension of fabrication of NRC-certified transportation packages will continue in effect until the NRC authorizes resumption of activities. As noted in the letter, the company submitted a test plan on June 23 for verifying the validity of previously performed puncture tests.

In addition, the letter confirms that SPEC will:

- (1) Perform testing of the Model SPEC-150 package design, and other package designs, as appropriate. Due to its frequency of use, the Model SPEC-150 will be tested first.
- (2) Preserve all packaging, components, specimens and test records for examination by the NRC. Submit test reports to the NRC within four business days after the test.

(3) Obtain the services of an independent quality assurance expert to audit the effectiveness of SPEC's quality assurance program in meeting NRC requirements.

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