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NRC PROPOSES \$3,000 FINE AGAINST VA. FIRM FOR RADIOGRAPHY VIOLATIONS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$3,000 fine against a Virginia company for two deliberate violations of agency requirements. The violations by Precision Testing and Inspection of Chantilly, Va., occurred last August and involve failing to post warning signs during radiography operations and providing inaccurate information to the NRC.

An NRC inspection and a subsequent investigation by the NRC Region II Office of Investigations identified the violations. They were discussed during a predecisional enforcement conference between NRC staff and representatives of the company on January 20.

The first violation occurred during industrial radiography operations on August 21 at a temporary job site in Reston, Va., when a radiographer deliberately failed to post warning signs in a work area as required. (Industrial radiography is a process used to inspect metal parts and welds. A sealed radiation source beams radiation at an object to be checked. Special photographic, or radiographic, film placed on the opposite side of the object is then exposed by radiation passing through, creating an image of the object much like an X-ray.) In this case, radiography was being used to make sure there were no embedded wires or piping in a concrete floor so holes could be safely drilled there. The NRC concluded the violation was deliberate because: (1) The radiographer was trained and knowledgeable about NRC requirements for posting warning signs during radiography operations; and (2) the radiographer admitted during an interview with an NRC investigator on September 30 that while he knew about the requirements, he failed to adhere to them because he was in a hurry to finish the work.

The second violation involved a failure by the company's Radiation Safety Officer (RSO) to provide accurate information to the NRC on August 25. On that date, the RSO told two NRC inspectors he did not hold that job when in fact he did. However, when interviewed by an NRC investigator on September 30, the individual admitted he had previously lied so that the NRC inspectors would leave and return to perform the inspection on another date. The inaccurate statement delayed the start of an NRC inspection of the facility.

“Deliberate violations are a very serious concern to the NRC because the NRC regulatory program relies, in part, on the honest and integrity of NRC licensees and their employees. As such, deliberate violations cannot be tolerated,” NRC Region I Administrator Hubert J. Miller wrote to Precision Testing and Inspection in a letter detailing the violations.

The company is required to provide the NRC with a written reply to the violations within 30 days.

In addition to issuing a fine to Precision Testing and Inspection, the NRC has issued a Notice of Violation to both the radiographer and RSO involved because their actions were deliberate.

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