

June 25, 2010

ALL AGREEMENT STATES, MICHIGAN

DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATIONAL BROCHURE ON THE NATIONAL SOURCE TRACKING SYSTEM (FSME-10-052)

Purpose: To encourage the Agreement States to promote the online use of the National Source Tracking System (NSTS) by their licensees and to provide reference information to aid in this effort.

Background: In December 2008, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) initiated the process of credentialing potential NSTS users in order for them to access the system and report their source transactions online. Since the process began, the NRC has approved access to over 900 individuals representing over 600 licensees. The credentialing process is contractually required in order to obtain the necessary Level 4 security certificate and requires a rigorous and time consuming identity proofing process. Although the process is lengthy and technically challenging, the NRC strongly encourages licensees to use the online system as it is the most effective, efficient, and most accurate method to report their source transactions. While the regulations allows for various methods to report source transactions, many licensees have opted to report their transactions via fax, which has proved to create a number of issues. These known issues have been relayed to licensees through the NSTS Blog.

Discussion: Many licensees have transitioned from reporting their transactions via fax to using the NSTS online system; however, there are still a large number of licensees who continue to fax in their source transactions. While faxing is not new technology, with email and mobile computing, it is becoming a less frequently used technology. Infrequent use can lead to issues with sending faxes. One of the main issues with the fax technology involves static on the fax line which can slow or interrupt transmission of data packets between the two fax machines. This static can cause issues with the fax receipt such as scrambled text, partial transmission, or failed transmission. Another common issue relates to how the individuals feed the paper through the fax. Each fax machine has its own requirements; therefore, if the paper is fed in the wrong direction, it can result in receipt of a blank fax.

As a result of these common issues with the faxing technology as well as to reduce the backlog of faxed information, the NRC strongly encourages the Agreement States to serve as ambassadors for NSTS to help promote the reporting of source transactions via the online system. The use of the online system allows licensees to receive real time confirmation that their source transfers are accurately reflected in the NSTS. As opposed to faxing information, the real time entry of information into NSTS is an incentive for licensees as it ensures minimum or no difficulty in complying with the reporting requirements due to a backlog of faxed information required to be manually entered by the NRC's contractor. Reporting online greatly simplifies the reporting process for users, reduces data entry errors by providing prompt feedback to users, and increases accountability by providing the most accurate and up-to-date information on nationally tracked sources.

As part of the NSTS outreach activities, the NRC has developed an NSTS brochure as a reference for licensees and regulators. The brochure provides key facts, such as the number of licensees possessing Category 1 and Category 2 sources, the steps involved in the credentialing process, transaction reporting to NSTS, annual inventory reconciliation, and how to contact the Help Desk. Copies of the NSTS brochure for your use and for distribution to your licensees have been enclosed for your convenience.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this communication or need additional copies of the brochure, please contact me at 301-415-3340, or the individual named below.

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As stated

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