



NRC NEWS

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NRC FINES CALIFORNIA FIRM \$7,000 FOR IMPORT AND DISTRIBUTION VIOLATIONS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has fined Universal Product Concepts, Inc., of Chino, Calif., \$7,000, for importing and distributing smoke detectors containing radioactive material without the required licenses from the NRC.

The NRC found that the company imported more than 19,400 smoke detectors containing the radioactive material americium-241 and distributed them to another company without meeting NRC's importation requirements and without first obtaining a distribution license required under NRC regulations. Smoke detectors are exempt from regulation once they are initially distributed, so retailers and consumers do not need a license to own them; however, the initial distribution must be made pursuant to an NRC license to ensure that the devices meet safety requirements.

The smoke detectors contain a small amount (not more than 1 microcurie) of americium-241 encapsulated in foil. The radioactive material ionizes a small chamber within the device and triggers an alarm when smoke passes through the chamber.

Universal Product Concepts had contacted NRC prior to importing the devices, and was aware of the regulatory requirements, but did not follow through by obtaining the necessary licenses before importing and distributing the devices.

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