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NRC Orders Permanent Shutdown of Aerotest Research Reactor, Requires Decommissioning Plan Details

The NRC has directed the permanent closure of the Aerotest Radiography and Research Reactor in San Ramon, Calif., due to the unresolved foreign ownership of the reactor's owner/operator, Aerotest. The facility has been voluntarily shut down since October 2010.

“The agency’s Order prohibits Aerotest from operating the reactor in the future,” said Roy Zimmerman, Director of the NRC’s Office of Enforcement. “The NRC has also given Aerotest 30 days to provide an updated plan for properly managing the reactor fuel and other licensed material until it can be permanently disposed of, and for decommissioning the facility.”

The Aerotest facility was among the corporate assets the Swedish firm Autoliv bought in 2000, but a transfer of the reactor license was neither requested nor approved by the NRC prior to the purchase. After fully examining the available information, the agency determined Autoliv’s ownership of Aerotest violated the Atomic Energy Act, which prohibits the NRC from issuing a license to any corporation or entity that is owned, controlled or dominated by a foreign corporation or a foreign government. In 2003 the NRC directed Autoliv to correct the situation.

While several transfer attempts were underway, Aerotest continued to operate safely and applied for a renewed license in 2005. The transfer attempts have proven unsuccessful, and as a result the NRC has denied the license renewal request, leaving the facility in continued violation of the Atomic Energy Act’s foreign ownership restrictions.

Aerotest has 20 days to respond to the Order or request a hearing on the NRC’s action. The Order will soon be available on the [Enforcement](#) section of the NRC’s website, as well as in the agency’s electronic document database, [ADAMS](#), under accession number ML13158A164.