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NRC Proposes \$28,000 Civil Penalty for California Company for Import and Distribution Violations

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has proposed a \$28,000 fine against CampCo, Inc., Smith & Wesson Watch Division, of Los Angeles, Calif., for various violations of requirements related to importing and distributing watches containing radioactive material.

The NRC found the company imported watches containing the radioactive isotope tritium and distributed them to individuals and another company in violation of the NRC's import and distribution regulations. Tritium watches 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 under an NRC license to ensure that the devices meet safety requirements.

The watches contain a small amount of tritium encapsulated in glass vials. The radioactive material ionizes a luminescent coating on the inside of the glass vial to produce light, so that the markers on the watch face and hands can be seen in low light.

CampCo Inc. holds an NRC exempt distribution license and is authorized to distribute several models of watches containing tritium. However, despite knowing its regulatory requirements, the company imported and distributed a model for which it was not authorized. The company also violated NRC reporting requirements.

The company was informed of the civil penalty on Dec. 14. It has the option to seek mediation under the NRC's alternative dispute resolution program.