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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

DEC 1 1989

Docket No. 99901172/89-01

Mr. Roland L. Leclerc, President
AKO, Incorporated
110 Broad Brook Road
Post Office Box 2283
Enfield, Connecticut 06082

Dear Mr. Leclerc:

This letter refers to the inspection conducted by Messrs. Walter P. Haass and Harvey M. Wescott of this office on November 27-29, 1989 at your facilities in Enfield, Connecticut and the discussions of their findings with you at the conclusion of the inspection. Release of this report was delayed due to NRC's ongoing review of nonconforming and substandard vendor products.

This inspection was prompted by a report received from Northeast Utilities that, during an audit conducted on July 19-20, 1989, it was determined that the expiration dates of certain test reports issued by the State of Connecticut, Weights and Measures Division, certifying the accuracy of weights used in calibration activities had either expired or were apparently falsely extended. It was concluded, therefore, that the calibrations performed by your company subsequent to March 1986 were invalid. The NRC conducted this inspection for the purpose of reviewing your weights and measures certification records and calibration records for other nuclear utilities to determine whether properly certified weights and measures traceable to national standards were utilized for the calibration of any other measuring devices used in safety-related activities. It was also our purpose to identify all nuclear reactor plant licensees and nuclear material licensees, as well as other government agencies, that have had measurement devices calibrated by your company during the period of concern.

The results of our inspection indicate that the records attesting to the certification of weights in March 1986 and January 1988 by the State of Connecticut had either expired or were apparently falsified. These weights were used to calibrate certain measuring devices for Northeast Utilities to be used in safety-related activities. However, Northeast Utilities determined that recalibration of the devices by another firm resulted in no need for correction. This is supported by the fact that the tolerance requirement for the calibration of Northeast Utilities measuring devices is of the order of 3 to 5 percent while the accuracy of the standard weights used by AKO for the calibration was found to be generally within 0.1 percent, both before and

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Mr. Roland L. Leclerc

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after these calibrations were performed by the State of Connecticut, Division of Weights and Measures. Those weights were condemned by the State of Connecticut because they did not meet NBS Class F specifications which require a tolerance limit of 0.01 percent. Review of AKO's sales records during the period of concern indicated that several nuclear utilities and companies were customers of AKO, but primarily for the purchase of torque wrench calibrators, torque test systems, and related parts. To ensure that any calibrations performed by AKO for nuclear plant licensees utilized properly certified weights, NRC issued Information Notice 90-36 on May 24, 1990.

At the conclusion of our inspection, you stated that you did not have the original certificates in your immediate possession from the State of Connecticut, Weights and Measures Division, which indicate that your master weights were certified from January 20, 1988 to date. You stated that at the time of our inspection the original certificates were in the possession of your legal counsel. By your letter and attachments dated February 5, 1990, the requested documentation was received. It has been reviewed and considered in arriving at our inspection conclusions.

Following completion of our inspection and further review of the findings, we determined that AKO's falsification of the expiration dates for the State of Connecticut certificates for the AKO standard weights, use of the non-certified weights for the calibration of the torque-measuring devices for Northeast Utilities, and the delivery of the calibrated devices to the licensee without proper evaluation of the deviation in the procurement documentation or notification to your customers of the deviation constitute a violation of the NRC's 10 CFR Part 21 regulation.

In accordance with the "General Statement of Policy and Procedure for NRC Enforcement Actions," 10 CFR Part 2, Appendix C (1990), the violation described in the enclosed Notice of Violation has been classified as a Severity Level IV violation because the evaluation or notification to NRC licensees of a deviation was not made. However, had the NRC determined that the improper calibration resulted in a defect, in accordance with 10 CFR Part 21, the violation could have been escalated to a Severity Level III violation.

You are required to respond to this Notice of Violation and should follow the instructions specified in the enclosed notice when preparing your response. In your response, you should document the specific actions taken and any additional actions you plan to prevent recurrence. After reviewing your response to the Notice of Violation, including your proposed corrective actions and the results of future inspections, the NRC will determine whether further NRC enforcement action is necessary to ensure compliance with NRC regulatory requirements.

During this inspection, it was found that the implementation of your QA program failed to meet certain NRC requirements in that standards used for calibration were not submitted for verification at the specified intervals. The specific finding and reference to the pertinent requirement are identified in the enclosed Notice of Nonconformance.

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Mr. Roland L. Leclerc


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Please provide us within 30 days from the date of this letter a written statement with respect to this Notice of Nonconformance containing: (1) a description of steps that have been or will be taken to correct this item; (2) a description of steps that have been or will be taken to prevent recurrence; and (3) the dates your corrective actions and preventive measures were or will be completed. Consideration may be given to extending your response time for good cause shown.

The responses requested by this letter are not subject to the clearance procedures of the Office of Management and Budget as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980, PL 96-511.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.790 or the Commission's regulations, a copy of this letter, Appendices A and B, and the enclosed inspection report will be placed in the NRC's Public Document Room.

Should you have any questions concerning this inspection, we are available to discuss them with you.


F-2 Brian K. Grimes, Director
Division of Reactor Inspections
and Safeguards
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosures:

1. Appendix A - Notice of Violation
2. Appendix B - Notice of Nonconformance
3. Inspection Report

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Mr. Pauline L. Leclerc

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Original signed by
B. D. Liaw

Brian K. Grimes, Director
Division of Reactor Inspections
and Safeguards
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosures:

1. Appendix A - Notice of Violation
2. Appendix B - Notice of Nonconformance
3. Inspection Report

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