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NRC Proposes \$3,500 Fine Against Delaware Firm for Loss of Radioactive Seeds

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has proposed a \$3,500 civil penalty to a Delaware medical firm for failing to properly secure licensed nuclear material.

On May 30, a physicist for Christiana Care Health Services discovered that 50 iodine-125 seeds were missing from a lab at the firm's offices in Newark, Del. The seeds are implanted into patients for the treatment of different types of cancer. Reviews performed by the company determined that seeds were on trays in the lab and inadvertently removed on March 16 for recycling. It is believed the trays were later picked up by a recycling company.

Christiana Care asked the recycling firm if the boxes holding the materials could be retrieved but was told that was not possible. The seeds were not recovered.

The NRC performed inspections at Christiana Care offices in response to the event. During these reviews, the agency identified one apparent violation: the company's failure to properly control and maintain surveillance of licensed nuclear material that was in a controlled or unrestricted area that was not in storage.

In light of the low radiation levels associated with the materials involved, no adverse health impacts on workers or members of the public are anticipated because of the incident.

The company will have 30 days to pay the fine or to appeal the decision.