



NRC NEWS

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NRC PROPOSES \$19,500 FINE AGAINST MISTRAS HOLDING GROUP FOR SAFETY VIOLATIONS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$19,500 fine against MISTRAS Holdings Group, based in Carol Stream, Ill., for seven apparent violations of NRC requirements.

The company has an NRC license to conduct industrial radiography using cameras that contain sealed radioactive sources to produce x-ray like images of metal objects and components.

The company operates under additional names as Conam Inspection and Engineering Services, Inc., and Quality Services Laboratories, Inc.

On October 27, 2005, two radiographers employed by the company were conducting radiography at a job location in Philadelphia, Penn. The radiographer received an overexposure to his right hand when he was trying to disassemble the guide tube from the camera without making sure that the sealed source was back in its shielded position. The radiographer told the inspectors that the job-site was noisy and he could not hear a radiation alarm even though he wore all the required radiation monitoring equipment.

The radiographer was examined at a local hospital. No observable injury to the skin of the right hand was reported.

The NRC conducted a special inspection that reviewed the causes and the circumstances surrounding this incident and the company's response.

NRC inspectors identified three apparent violations. They include failure to control the dose to the skin or to any extremity of a radiation worker; failure to perform a survey of equipment containing NRC-licensed material after completing a radiographic exposure to determine that the sealed source had been returned to its shielded position before dismantling the

equipment; and failure to ensure that the sealed radiography source remained in the shielded position after it was returned to this shielded position.

In addition, NRC inspectors identified two apparent violations related to the radiographer in charge leaving the site of radiographic operations to return film to his truck. NRC regulations specify that two radiographers must be present while radiography is being performed and that the radiographer in charge must be present to supervise radiographic operations.

The company implemented corrective actions to address the causes of the problems and to enhance their radiation safety program. They included notifying all company's facilities about the overexposure event and requiring all radiographic personnel to discuss the event during the next training; suspending the radiographer and the assistant until they receive additional training; hiring an outside consultant to conduct an assessment and analysis of the potential overexposure to the radiographer's hands; and continuing the medical reviews of the radiographer.

The NRC also conducted a follow-up inspection to review the company's corrective actions for a violation issued by the NRC on August 17, 2005. The violation involved a radiography camera with NRC-licensed material being left unattended and unsecured at a temporary job site in Philadelphia, Penn., on May 17, 2005. The NRC found three additional violations included in the proposed fine during this inspection.

During a review of the company's records NRC inspectors found a report describing a misplaced radiographic camera. When the camera was located later in the day, it was not in a locked and secured location. The incident was not immediately reported to the NRC.

In addition, during a review of operations at a temporary job site in Trainer, Penn., inspectors found that radiation surveys were not conducted at the perimeter of the job-site as is required by regulations.

The violations associated with this inspection included failure to secure and maintain control of a radiography device; failure to immediately report a lost or missing radiography device; and failure to conduct perimeter surveys at a temporary job-site.

The company took corrective actions to address the problems. This included increasing the frequency of physical inventories of NRC-licensed material and improving physical security for the storage location.

"The NRC's regulations are designed to protect public health and safety. We expect our license holders to adhere to these regulations," said James Caldwell, NRC Regional Administrator.

The company has until May 7 to either pay the fine or to protest it. If the fine is protested and subsequently imposed by the NRC staff, the company may request a hearing.

The letter notifying MISTRAS Holdings Group of the proposed fine has been posted to the NRC web site at:

<http://www.nrc.gov/what-we-do/regulatory/enforcement/current.html#materials> .

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