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RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL REMOVED FROM SITE IN PUERTO RICO

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff announced Wednesday that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has completed the transfer of licensed radioactive materials from a facility in an industrial park in Caguas, Puerto Rico under the terms of an order issued by the NRC this past January 15. The facility was operated by Crossland Boiler Sales and Service, Inc., and by NDT Services, Inc.

NRC officials issued the order to NDTs following NRC inspections on January 11 and 14 which found that the company had failed to maintain adequate security for the licensed material. When the company was not able to provide the needed security, the NRC contacted the EPA which arranged for 24-hour security and the removal of radioactive material from the building using its superfund emergency actions program.

NRC officials confirmed that six radiographic exposure devices which contained Iridium-192 were removed from the building on January 27. The last radiographic exposure device containing cobalt-60 was safely transferred late Tuesday. Officials added that all of the radioactive materials were transferred to authorized recipients and that the transfers were observed by NRC inspectors.

NRC officials had issued an order on March 27, 1998 which suspended the company's license to use the material but allowed its storage at the Caguas industrial park. When NRC inspectors found that the material was not secure from access by unauthorized individuals, as required, the agency issued another order for its removal.