



NRC NEWS

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NRC PROPOSES \$6,000 FINE FOR HIGH MOUNTAIN INSPECTION SERVICE

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a fine of \$6,000 against High Mountain Inspection Service, Inc. of Mills, Wyoming, for violating NRC requirements.

In a letter to the company, Bruce S. Mallet, Administrator of the NRC's Region IV office in Arlington, Texas, said that as a result of an NRC inspection, the agency determined that the company violated NRC training requirements for the possession and use of radioactive materials.

The violation involved the company's use of an individual who had not been fully trained to perform the role of a radiographer's assistant at a refinery in Cheyenne, Wyo., where the company was conducting radiography services in November 2004. Additionally, the company failed to provide the individual with radiation monitoring equipment, as required.

Radiography is a non-destructive testing method which uses a sealed radiation source to make x-ray like images of heavy metal objects like pumps, valves, and pipes.

"To assure radiation safety at temporary job sites, the NRC places a great deal of importance on having a second, trained individual who can provide immediate assistance should a radiographer become incapacitated during radiography operations," Mallet said. "It is also important that all radiography personnel be equipped with radiation monitoring equipment, including an alarm rate meter to give warning of abnormal conditions."

NRC staff discussed the apparent violation, its significance, the root cause and the company's corrective actions during an enforcement conference with High Mountain officials on May 31. The company said it has taken steps to prevent recurrence.

The NRC has classified the violation at Severity Level III, which carries a \$6,000 civil penalty. The agency has a four-level severity scale in which Severity Level I is the most serious.

The company has 30 days to either pay the proposed fine or challenge it. The NRC fined High Mountain \$12,000 in April 2004 for two violations of NRC security and safety requirements.

The NRC's letter, its enclosures, and the company's response will be made available to interested members of the public through the agency's public electronic reading room at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html> . Help in accessing these documents is available from the NRC Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209.

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