



# NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
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## **NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$5,500 FINE FOR BAYOU INSPECTION SERVICES, INC.**

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has proposed a fine of \$5,500 against Bayou Inspection Services, Inc. for two violations of NRC safety regulations governing the conduct of radiography work in off-shore waters. Bayou, based in Amelia, La., performs radiography for off-shore pipe laying and other operations.

NRC inspectors found that the company failed to notify the NRC prior to conducting radiography operations in off-shore waters, and failed to obtain an exemption from the NRC for the use of "pipeliner" radiography devices. A pipeliner is used to inspect the welds joining sections of pipe being laid on the floor of the Gulf of Mexico to transport oil and gas from offshore production operations. Pipeliners contain a strong radioactive source that takes an X-ray-like picture of the welds being inspected to insure there are no flaws. Companies may use the device only with an NRC exemption that specifies certain safety precautions to reduce workers' exposure to radiation.

Bayou officers met with the NRC in Arlington, Texas, on February 9 to discuss circumstances surrounding the violations and others that were found during the NRC's inspection of Bayou's operations. Subsequently, the NRC determined that the two violations, failure to notify and failure to obtain an exemption, constituted a single level III violation. The NRC uses a four-level scale on which a level I violation is the most severe. Level III violations carry a \$5,500 base civil penalty, subject to adjustment based on various factors. Two other violations involving failure to perform exposure evaluations required by NRC regulations were judged to be level IV, which have no fine associated. No injuries to workers or the public resulted from the violations.

Since the inspection, Bayou has filed the required notification forms and requested an exemption to use pipeliners. However, NRC Regional Administrator Ellis W. Merschoff said in a letter to Bayou president Willie Tezeno, that the fine is imposed, "To emphasize the importance of strict compliance with NRC requirements associated with radiography operations, and the significance that the NRC attaches to violations committed willfully . . ." The company has 30 days to pay the fine or protest it. If the protest is denied, the company may request a hearing by the NRC.

Copies of the Notice of Violation sent to Bayou Inspection Services, Inc. and the NRC's inspection report can be found on the NRC web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/OE/rpr/ea00297.htm>.

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