



NRC NEWS

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Office of Public Affairs

Telephone: 301/415-8200

Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

E-mail: opa@nrc.gov

Site: <http://www.nrc.gov>

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NRC ORDERS ALASKA RADIOGRAPHY FIRM TO CEASE OPERATIONS BECAUSE OF REPEATED VIOLATIONS OF SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has ordered Alaska Industrial X-Ray, Inc. (AIX), to cease licensed radiography operations immediately because the company repeatedly violated NRC requirements that two qualified individuals conduct industrial radiography at a temporary job site.

The suspension order, issued Oct. 19, is effective immediately and until the company implements measures that reassure the NRC its regulations will be met.

AIX, based in Anchorage, routinely performs radiography at a client's industrial facility, using a makeshift "vault." The company applied to the NRC to have the vault approved as a permanent radiography installation in 1999. The agency determined the vault did not meet safety standards, and the company was unwilling to make improvements. Since the vault is considered a temporary job site, the company is required to have two qualified individuals (either two radiographers or one radiographer and a radiography assistant) present when performing radiography operations to guard against inadvertent exposures to the radiographers or others.

An NRC inspection and investigation from June through October determined that AIX employees routinely violated the two-person requirement by having one radiographer present while the second went to a separate facility to develop film. This practice occurred regularly for up to three years, even though the company was cited by the NRC for similar violations in 2001 and had pledged to follow the two-person requirement.

"The safety and health of the public and workers are at risk whenever industrial radiography is conducted and these safety requirements are not being followed," said Cynthia Carpenter, NRC's director of enforcement.

The NRC issues suspension orders to remove a threat to public health and safety. They can be effective immediately when necessary to protect public health and safety or in response to willful violations of NRC safety requirements.

Industrial radiography uses a radioactive source to perform non-invasive testing of materials. Improper handling of the radiography camera and the radiation source can result in harmful exposure to workers or members of the public.

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