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NRC Issues Order Imposing \$7,000 Fine Against Puerto Rico Firm For Failing to Dispose of Licensed Nuclear Materials

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued an Order to a Santurce, Puerto Rico, company imposing a \$7,000 civil penalty for failure to dispose of licensed nuclear material in its possession. The material is contained in nuclear devices used for medical diagnostic purposes.

The NRC considered additional daily fines against Centro de Medicina (CDM) Nuclear because of its ongoing possession of the material, but the agency has determined further penalties are not warranted because CDM has initiated steps towards site decommissioning.

In a previous Order issued Aug. 7, 2012, the NRC notified CDM that it had failed to pay its annual licensing fee to the agency and had 20 days to do so. When the firm did not comply, the NRC revoked CDM's license on Aug. 28, 2012, and required CDM to take several steps, including arranging for the disposal or transfer of any licensed nuclear materials possessed under its license.

During a visit to the Santurce site on Jan. 17, 2013, an NRC inspector confirmed that the company's licensed radioactive sources were properly accounted for and secured. However, despite the August 2012 Order, CDM was not acting to address the issue and had failed to respond to NRC communications on the matter.

An NRC notice of the proposed \$7,000 fine was issued on Nov. 5, 2013. When CDM did not respond to the notice, an NRC inspector visited the facility on Jan. 29, 2014. Company representatives agreed at that time to obtain cost estimates for disposal of the material but subsequently said CDM did not have sufficient funds to do so. Since then, the company has secured an estimate for disposal or transfer of the materials.

CDM has 20 days from the date of the current Order to pay the civil penalty or request a hearing.