

The Service Difference™

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Syncor International Corporation

May 14, 1997

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Attn.: Document Control Desk
Washington, DC 20555

RE: Reply to a Notice of Violation, Syncor International Corporation, Woodland Hills, CA
(Munster, IN) License No. 04-26507-01MD

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in response to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) letter of April 18, 1997, regarding the inspection of Syncor's Munster, IN pharmacy, on February 24, 1997. Following is Syncor's response to the Notice of Violation:

1. This violation occurred as a result of a new blocking and bracing system that was being tested at Syncor's Munster, IN pharmacy. The new blocking and bracing system consisted of parallel plates which formed tracks into which the transport containers could be slid. A high friction material ("non-skid") was placed on the floor of the cargo area, with the intention that the transport containers would be sufficiently blocked and braced so as to prevent movement during conditions normally incident to transportation.

The parallel plates prevented side to side motion, however, the high friction material on the floor of the cargo area was not sufficient to prevent front to back movement of the transport containers. This system was being pilot tested at this pharmacy only.

The purpose of developing and evaluating a new vehicle cargo area design is to try to improve ergonomics. Due to the weight of some of the transport containers, back injury prevention is a primary concern at Syncor. The system which was being pilot tested at the Munster, IN pharmacy would allow the cases to be lifted out of the vehicle in a manner which may reduce back stress, and hopefully, prevent back injuries.

2. To correct the problem of the transport containers being able to shift in the front to back direction, inserts are being used to block and brace the transport containers within the tracks. As a transport container is removed, an additional insert is put into the vacated position, which will prevent the remaining transport containers from shifting. This has been successful in preventing front to back movement of the transport containers under conditions normally incident to transportation.
3. To avoid further violations of this nature, future cargo area design innovations will be fully evaluated by Syncor's Quality and Regulatory Department to ensure that all applicable regulatory requirements are being met.
4. Full compliance was achieved by March 3, 1997.

During the course of the inspection, an item of concern was identified regarding thyroid bioassays performed on an individual who was involved in decontaminating a spill involving iodine-131. The NRC requested that Syncor address this concern by providing a description of actions Syncor has taken or plans to take to ensure that thyroid bioassays are conducted after sufficient time has elapsed for iodine-131 concentration in the thyroid gland.

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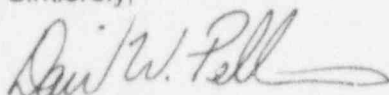
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One of the individuals involved performed bioassay approximately one hour after completing clean up of the spill. Syncor's "Emergency Procedure for Personnel Exposed to I-131" specifically states, "Perform personnel bioassay between 6-24 hours..." Although a bioassay performed at one hour after completion of spill clean up may have helped provide an early prognosis, Syncor's procedures do require a bioassay measurement to be performed 6-24 hours after the exposure to iodine-131 to allow for accumulation of iodine-131 in the thyroid. Syncor has developed a sign (black letters on a bright yellow background) which is posted in all of Syncor's pharmacies detailing emergency procedures to be followed by personnel exposed to iodine-131.

To specifically address the situation at the Munster, IN pharmacy, the individuals involved are now aware of the importance of the proper timing for thyroid bioassay. Syncor will send an explanatory memorandum to all Syncor pharmacies reiterating this requirement. This will serve to raise the level of awareness, and remind Syncor's staff about the emergency procedures for personnel exposed to iodine-131 which are posted in each pharmacy.

If I can be of any further assistance, please contact me at (818) 737-4551.

Sincerely,



David W. Pellicciarini, CHP
Program Manager, Health Physics

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