

No: III-13-040

November 4, 2013

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NRC Proposed a \$3,500 Fine for a Michigan Cardiology Practice Over Willful Violations of Regulations for Employee Radiation Dose Monitoring

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has proposed a fine of \$3,500 for Jackson Cardiology Associates of Jackson, Mich. after finding a nuclear medicine technologist employed by the practice willfully violated NRC regulations by not wearing the required radiation dose monitoring badges and lying to an NRC inspector about it.

During a routine inspection on Aug. 20, 2012, an NRC inspector found the technologist without the required monitoring badges to measure occupational radiation dose. The technologist initially told the inspector she had left the badges at home. But during a follow-up inspection on Nov. 7, 2012, the technologist admitted she had lied to the inspector and said she lost the badges in February 2012.

The NRC's Office of Investigations in a follow-up investigation found the technologist did not have her monitoring badges analyzed or replaced between the latter half of 2010 and June 2012. The investigation also found the technologist stopped wearing her monitoring badges in late June 2012, and she had not made payments to the vendor who analyzed Jackson Cardiology's monitoring badges.

The first violation is for the technologist's willful failure to wear the required badges; the second is for the technologist willfully providing the NRC with incomplete and inaccurate information about her badges. The proposed fine is the base civil penalty for Severity Level III violations, the second to lowest of the NRC's four severity levels. Jackson Cardiology has taken several corrective actions, including changing procedures for radiation monitoring reports and payments, retraining the technologist and increasing oversight and supervision.

"We cannot tolerate willful violations of NRC requirements nor lying to NRC inspectors," said Cynthia Pederson, NRC Region III Administrator. "While the actual safety significance in this case was limited because of the low dose rates, the technologist's actions kept Jackson Cardiology from following radiation exposure monitoring requirements and impacted the NRC's regulatory inspection process."

Jackson Cardiology has the option to deny the violations or request alternative dispute resolution with the NRC to resolve the issue.