



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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ADPH proposes civil penalty against company for failing to properly maintain security, accountability of radioactive sources

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health has proposed a \$650 civil penalty against BFGoodrich Tire Manufacturing of Tuscaloosa for a violation of the Rules of the State Board of Health. The department identified the violation when BFGoodrich reported in May that two devices containing radioactive sources were missing from the Tuscaloosa plant site.

BFGoodrich reported that these devices were last accounted for in October 2008 and were discovered missing on April 22, 2009. The devices have not been located or recovered and may have left the plant site when the production line on which they were attached was dismantled and removed as scrap. Each contained small amounts of the isotope Americium 241. The violation involved the failure of BFGoodrich to properly maintain security and accountability of radioactive sources. Such devices are used in fixed gauges that measure the thickness of rubber product during production.

“We expect all companies that hold Alabama Radioactive Material licenses to maintain control and accountability of all nuclear material by adhering to the rules,” said Kirksey E. Whatley, director of the Office of Radiation Control. “This violation is a concern because someone could have been exposed to radiation if the devices were found and mishandled. There is also the possibility that the devices could be melted as scrap and thus cause radioactive contamination at the steel mill and in recycled steel produced by the mill.”

Following the discovery of the missing devices, BFGoodrich took immediate corrective actions to properly account for all remaining radioactive devices on site, to retrain employees in the importance of maintaining security and accountability of devices, and to institute revised safety procedures for sources of radiation. BFGoodrich Tire Manufacturing has until July 31 to pay or contest the proposed civil penalty. If the proposed civil penalty is contested, and subsequently imposed by the Alabama Department of Public Health, the company may request a hearing.

For additional information on the regulation of devices containing radioactive material, please call the Office of Radiation Control, Alabama Department of Public Health, at 1-800-582-1866 or visit www.adph.org/radiation.

