

August 19, 2004

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-04-023

This preliminary notification constitutes EARLY notice of events of POSSIBLE safety or public interest significance. The information is as initially received without verification or evaluation, and is basically all that is known by the Region IV staff on this date.

Facility

Department of Energy (DOE)
Paducah BJC Waste Generator Services
Paducah, KY

Licensee Emergency Classification

Notification of Unusual Event
 Alert
 Site Area Emergency
 General Emergency
 Not Applicable

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON REPORT OF POTENTIAL LEAKING SHIPPING CONTAINERS

DESCRIPTION:

On August 16, 2004, the NRC Region IV office was notified by the State of Arizona that a truck carrying depleted uranium tetrafluoride as low specific activity (LSA) waste enroute to the Nevada Test Site had stopped at a truck stop in New Mexico where the driver noticed a small quantity of a white granular solid and a clear, gel-like material on the bed of the truck. Two drivers of other vehicles transporting the same material stopped in Gallup, New Mexico, and reported the same conditions; all were instructed to remain in place by DOE. Another driver was located in Flagstaff, Arizona, who reported finding similar material. DOE radiological technicians were dispatched to survey the trucks. More details of the reported incident is located in NRC Operations Center Report Number 40961.

The shipments were packaged in T-Hopper containers overpacked in sealand boxes. The shipment package was prepared by spreading an absorbent material around the floor to absorb any condensation. Bags of vermiculite were added to fill void space. The DOE radiological technicians determined that the material observed by the truck drivers was packing material from the overpack. The technicians surveyed this material and detected no radioactive contamination.

There has been media interest.

Region IV received notification of this occurrence from NRC's Operation Center on August 17, 2004. Region IV has informed OEDO, NMSS, OSTP, and the Region's SLO and PAO. The information presented herein has been discussed with the State and is current as of 7:00 am (CDT) on August 19, 2004.

ADAMS ACCESSION NUMBER: ML042320358

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