

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-I-05-027

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 I staff on this date.

Facility

Virginia Commonwealth University
Office of Environmental Health & Safety
P.O. Box 980112
Richmond, Virginia

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

Docket No.: 03003297

License No.: 45-00048-17

SUBJECT: UNPLANNED CONTAMINATION OF AN AIR HANDLER UNIT

On September 14, 2005, the licensee's Radiation Safety Officer contacted the NRC Operations Center to report that a pipe that drains their radioactive waste disposal area had cracked, resulting in leakage. The licensee determined that the leakage had contaminated an air handling system located in a mechanical area beneath the pipe. The air handler supplies fresh air to a portion of Sanger Hall, a building containing laboratories and offices. The licensee performed surveys and found contamination on the top, sides, and floor of the air handler unit; however, no contamination was found in the ducts leading out of the air handler or on surfaces in the building outside the confined mechanical area. The licensee shut down the air handler unit, restricted access to the mechanical area, and contained the leakage. The licensee has concluded that no personnel dose resulted from this event.

Region I plans to conduct a special inspection during the week of September 19, 2005.

The Commonwealth of Virginia has been notified of this event. The Region I Office of Public Affairs is prepared to respond to media inquiries. This information is current as of 3:30 p.m., September 16, 2005.

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