DCS No.: 99990001060214
Date: February 16, 2006

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-I-06-002

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 Mostoller Landfill
Somerset, Pennsylvania

Licensee Emergency Classification
___ Notification of Unusual Event
___ Alert
___ Site Area Emergency
___ General Emergency
_X_ Not Applicable

Docket No.: NA
License No.: NA

SUBJECT: IDENTIFICATION OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL AT A PENNSYLVANIA LANDFILL

On February 14, 2006, NRC Region I was notified by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that a portal monitor located at the Mostoller Landfill near Somerset, PA, had alarmed on February 10, 2006, when a truckload of trash entered the facility. The load appears to have originated in part from the Department of Commerce/National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in Washington, DC, and contained two static eliminators.

The static eliminators were manufactured by NRD, LLC, of Grand Island, NY. NRD confirms that the devices, (Model A2003, serial numbers SA2200 and SA2202) containing approximately 20.25 millicuries of americium-241 each, were originally distributed as generally licensed devices to NOAA in June 1981, as part of a shipment containing other static eliminators. The static eliminators measure approximately 54 inches long.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania also informed the NRC that Applied Health Physics (AHP), a NRC licensee who is authorized to possess the radioactive material, retrieved the static eliminators from the landfill and secured them at its facility located near Pittsburgh, PA. AHP informed the NRC that they performed surveys and found no loose contamination in the trash where the static eliminators were found. AHP had also performed a survey with a Ludlum Model 19 microR survey meter of two shelves where the static eliminators had been placed at the landfill. The survey indicated an exposure rate of 1 mR/hr. AHP also stated that measured background rate for this area was 5 microR/hr. AHP wrapped and isolated the shelves, and left them at the landfill.

Once AHP arrived back at their facility with the static eliminators they performed a leak test of the static eliminators and found 0.0037 microcuries of removable contamination located at the opposite end of the damaged static eliminators. This level of contamination does not appear to exceed the allowable limit of 0.005 microcuries for sealed sources as contained in 10 CFR 31.5. AHP indicated to the NRC that both static eliminators were found inside a single sealed box which was severely damaged at one end. It seems likely that the damage occurred during processing of the trash and transport to the landfill.

The NRC has been in contact with NOAA. NOAA is actively conducting an investigation into this matter and will keep the NRC informed of its progress.

NRC Region I will be performing a reactive inspection on February 16, 2006. As noted above, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is aware of this event.

The Region I Office of Public Affairs is prepared to respond to media inquires. This information is current as of 4:30 p.m., February 15, 2006.

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