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I-96-66
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September 30, 1996
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NRC STAFF SENDS INSPECTOR TO INS FACILITY IN SPRINGFIELD, MA
TO LOOK INTO WEEKEND WATER SPILL

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has dispatched an inspector to the INS nuclear laundry facility in Springfield, Massachusetts, where some 180,000 gallons of slightly radioactively contaminated water was spilled over the weekend.

INS holds an NRC license to clean work clothes used at nuclear facilities. It also has an industrial laundry which handles items from non-nuclear customers.

INS notified the NRC that the facility was flooded between the time workers left on Saturday and returned yesterday morning, when a valve on a washing machine stuck open. INS estimates that a maximum of 180,000 gallons of water flowed through the washer, through the building, through the dock area and into the storm sewer, which empties into the Dimmick Pond next door. INS representatives tested the water flowing into the storm sewer and determined the levels of radioactive material were less than the allowable release limits. INS has told the NRC that samples of the pond were below the minimal detectable activity.

Some of the water also flowed into the underground low level waste storage facility in the basement of the building. The floor of the laundry was also under water. INS has taken samples throughout the facility as each area was cleaned. According to INS, all of those samples were below the detectable activity level.

The NRC inspector will take independent samples and monitor the licensee's activities.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts was notified and has sent a representative to the site.

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