

DCS No.: 99990001204
Date: December 6, 2000

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-I-00-37

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

NEN Life Science Products
549 Albany Street
Boston, Massachusetts

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

Docket No.: NA
License No.: 00-3200 (Agreement State)

SUBJECT: SKIN EXPOSURE GREATER THAN 50 REM

On December 5, 2000, at approximately 4:00 p.m., a representative of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Radiation Control Program reported to the NRC that NEN Life Science Products, Massachusetts License No. 00-3200, had an event which resulted in one person receiving greater than 50 rem to the skin. The event occurred at the licensee's North Billerica, Massachusetts, facility. According to the State representative, the event occurred on December 4, 2000, at approximately 3:30 p.m., when an NEN Life Science employee was transferring remotely 3.5 curies of yttrium-90 in 3 milliliters of solution in a vial from a shielded dispensing box to a lead container. During the transfer, the cap and the vial separated, and the vial fell from the remote handling device, causing the material to be splashed onto the employee. The employee immediately contacted the on-site Radiation Safety Office to report the incident and obtain assistance. NEN Life Sciences' contract health physicists decontaminated the employee and had the employee shower. The initial dose estimate for the highest affected area is 230 rads to the skin of the chin. A preliminary bioassay indicates an uptake of less than one microcurie of yttrium-90. According to the report, the licensee plans to perform additional bioassays.

This information is current as of 12:00 p.m., December 6, 2000.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts informed NRC of the event and began inspection on December 6. Region I is prepared to respond to inquiries by the media.

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