

January 19, 2001

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-II-01-003

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 Region II staff (Atlanta, Georgia) on this date.

Facility

ST. Joseph's Hospital
(An Agreement State Licensee)
Savannah, GA
License: License Number: GA-48-1

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

Subject: BRACHYTHERAPY EQUIPMENT FAILURE

The Georgia Radioactive Materials Program notified the NRC Operations Center on January 18, 2001 that the licensee had reported a malfunction of a brachytherapy device following the treatment of a patient. The device was a Novoste Beta-Cath system, model A1000 Series, with 300 millicuries (11.1 gigabecquerel) of strontium-90 seeds. The equipment failure occurred after the patient treatment while the seeds were being removed. The seeds ejected and went into a shielded storage container called a bailout box rather than into their normal storage location. There was no excessive exposure to the patient or to the hospital personnel, and the patient was removed from the room immediately. All seeds have been accounted for by the Physicist and the Radiologist.

The Georgia Program has the event under investigation to determine the cause for the equipment failure. The manufacturer of the Novoste device is also a Georgia licensee.

Region II received initial notification of this occurrence by telephone from the NRC Operations Center. This information presented herein has been discussed with the State and is current as of 09:15 a.m., Friday, January 19, 2001.

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