

February 26, 2001

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-III-01-006

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 III staff on this date.

Facility

IMCO Recycling of Ohio, Inc.
Uhrichville, OH
Non-licensee

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

SUBJECT: DEPLETED URANIUM CONTAMINATION IN ALUMINUM INGOTS

DESCRIPTION:

On February 20, 2001, a truck leaving the recycling firm set off the radiation monitor at the facility's exit. The truck was carrying ingots of aluminum from recycled airplane parts.

Further investigation by the company determined that depleted uranium counterweights had been among the aluminum airplane parts that were melted and processed into the ingots. Depleted uranium counterweights were also found among aluminum parts awaiting melting.

A total of 118,000 pounds of aluminum ingots were found to be contaminated with depleted uranium. Radiation levels were measured to be about 50 microRoentgen per hour (several times normal background radiation levels).

Airplane counterweights containing depleted uranium are exempt from NRC or Agreement State licensing. However, regulations prohibit further processing of the depleted uranium counterweights, including melting.

The airplane parts, including the counterweights, were obtained from Cousin's Industries, Oceanside, New York. The counterweights in the remaining airplane parts were being removed for return to the New York company.

IMCO Recycling retained a consultant to perform additional radiation surveys of its facility. No contamination was found in any equipment or areas of the facility other than the aluminum ingots. The ingots remain in storage at the IMCO Recycling facility, pending a decision of their disposition.

The Ohio Department of Health conducted an inspection February 22 to review the circumstances surrounding the contamination and to perform additional radiation surveys. The State notified Region III (Chicago) of the incident on February 23 and provided additional information on February 26. The State of New York was also notified.

Region III informed the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, the Office of State and Tribal Programs, and Region I (Philadelphia).

This information is current as of 10:00 a.m. CST on February 26, 2001.

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