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To: "axa@nrc.gov" <axa@nrc.gov> A. Adams, NRR
Date: Tue, Apr 18, 2000 5:04 PM
Subject: FW: maneater

Mr. Adams:

The following is provided for your information. It is the copy from an article that will be published in a student publication on campus entitled "The Maneater". Please contact me should you need additional information.

Sincerely,

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> A radiation leak at the MU nuclear reactor exposed a small amount
> of a radioactive substance for three minutes last
> Wednesday and was
> investigated by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission on
> Friday.
> NRC inspectors from Washington flew to Columbia
> to investigate
> the incident and are expected to issue a report on
> the matter within
> 30 to 45 days, NRC spokesman Victor Dricks said.
> "At this point, we're simply gathering
> information," Dricks said.
> "Determining whether violations occurred happens
> much later."
> According to an MU press release, the incident
> "created a higher
> than normal radiation area on the floor of the
> reactor," and was the
> result of maintenance activities.
> A rod of nuclear material emitted the radiation,
> which was equal to
> several CAT scans.
> The leak, which happened during reactor
> refueling, lasted three
> minutes, and no one reported being exposed to the
> radiation. The
> radiation that was leaked did not enter the
> environment outside the
> reactor.
> Radiation was emitted when the rod was placed in
> a container that

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> was removed during an inspection, Vice Provost of
> Research Jack
> Burns said.
> After the accident, additional safety measures
> were adopted to
> heighten safety at the facility, Burns said.
> "We just have added a larger amount of checking
> and redundancy
> to the process," Burns said.
> Despite the accident, Burns said, the reactor
> has one of the best
> safety records for reactors.
> "It is absolutely safe," Burns said.
> According to the press release, shipments of
> radiopharmaceuticals
> for cancer patients were not disrupted by the
> incident.
> Ken Brooks, acting director of the reactor,
> could not be reached
> Monday, but the press release stated that Brooks
> "has formed an
> internal response team to review the incident and
> recommend
> corrective actions."
> Dricks would not comment on what the
> three-person investigation
> team learned, or on what would be in the contents of
> the report.
> The NRC has the authority to impose fines for
> some violations,
> although Dricks cautioned against speculating on
> such penalties.
> "We have the authority to issue civil penalties
> to take enforcement
> action," he said. "In this case, our enforcement
> action is restricted to
> certain types of circumstances."
> Such circumstances would include willfully
> submitting false
> information to NRC inspectors or findings of
> harassment of those who
> report safety violations.
> Dricks also said unscheduled inspections usually
> occur at
> commercial power reactors, not research reactors. At
> commercial
> power reactors, which tend to be larger, NRC employs
> resident
> inspectors.
> The NRC will use Friday's time at the reactor to
> compose a report
> of the incident that is aimed at providing
> information to the public
> about how the event happened, and is not submitted

- > to an authority
- > above the NRC, Dricks said.
- > NRC also conducts periodic planned inspections
- > of MU's reactor,
- > Dricks said.
- > Christian Basi, Assistant Director for News
- > News Bureau
- > University of Missouri-Columbia
- > (573) 882-4430