

August 29, 2001

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-III-01-029

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

Crompton Corporation
Mapleton, Illinois
License: IL-01314-01
(Agreement State Licensee)

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

SUBJECT: Fixed Gauges Damaged in Fire

DESCRIPTION:

On August 28, 2001, the Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety (IDNS) notified the Headquarters Operations Center that a fire at the Crompton Corporation facility in Mapleton, Illinois, had damaged seven fixed gauges containing from 50 to 1200 millicuries of cesium-137.

The fire, which began late August 21 and continued into the early morning hours of August 22, involved aluminum alkyl which burns at a high temperature (1800 degrees Fahrenheit).

After the fire was extinguished, the company's 17 fixed gauges were surveyed for damage and leakage. Of the 17 gauges, the lead shielding in seven gauges was damaged, but there was no indication of leakage from the sources. The damage to the shielding resulted when the lead melted due to the high temperature of the fire. None of the gauge housings were breached in the fire.

IDNS conducted an inspection of the site on August 22 and erected warning barriers. Representatives from the manufacturer, Ohmart/Vega, also were on site August 22. The IDNS inspectors measured radiation levels around the seven damaged gauges. The radiation levels were a maximum of 200 millirem per hour at the gauge surface. The inspectors also surveyed debris and ash from the fire and all readings were negative.

The seven damaged gauges were removed and shielded, then shipped to Ohmart/Vega for examination. The manufacturer determined that none of the sealed sources had been damaged.

The remaining 10 undamaged gauges were locked up pending restart of the plant.

The Office of State and Tribal Programs and the Office of Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards were notified of the incident.

Region III (Chicago) was notified of the fire and the damaged gauges at 2:27 p.m. CDT on August 28 by the Headquarters Operations Center which had been notified by the IDNS. The information in this preliminary notification has been discussed with IDNS. This information is current as of 9:30 a.m. CDT on August 29, 2001.

**CONTACTS: James Lynch
(630) 829-9661**

**Monte Phillips
(630) 829-9806**