

February 11, 2002

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-III-02-004

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

Battelle Memorial Institute
Columbus, OH
(Agreement State Licensee)
License No. 03610250000

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

SUBJECT: LOSS OF CONTROL OF CONTAMINATED DUCT

DESCRIPTION:

On February 8, 2002, the Ohio Bureau of Radiation Protection reported Battelle Memorial Institute's loss of control of a laboratory duct with internal uranium contamination. The incident was immediately reportable under Ohio regulations.

Remodeling of a previously-decommissioned laboratory at Battelle's King Avenue facility involved removal of a 13-foot long section of four-inch diameter duct. The duct was surveyed and found to have internal contamination. The licensee estimated that 1.5 microcuries of uranium-234 and smaller quantities of uranium-235 and uranium-238 were in the duct.

Uranium-234 is an alpha particle emitter and may be an internal radiation hazard, if inhaled or ingested.

The duct was inadvertently sent to a construction debris landfill in Franklin County, south of Columbus, Ohio. The licensee is contacting the landfill to determine whether recovery of the duct is possible.

The Ohio Bureau of Radiation Protection is investigating the loss of control. The State notified the NRC Operations Center of the incident.

Region III informed the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards and the Office of State and Tribal Programs.

This information is current as of 10:00 a.m. CST on February 11, 2002.

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