

June 27, 2002

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-II-02-023

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

STARMET CMI, Inc.
(An Agreement State Licensee)
Barnwell, SC
License: 322

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

Subject: EMERGENCY ORDER ISSUED BY THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

The South Carolina Division of Waste Management, Department of Health and Environmental Control notified the NRC Region II office that an Emergency and Administrative Order has been issued to the licensee. The licensee has been in Chapter 11 Bankruptcy since March 22, 2000. Starmet operated a uranium processing facility which has converted UF6 to UF4, the reduction of UF4 green salt to metal, and processed other uranium oxide compounds over the years.

The order requires the licensee to cease all activities related to site operations, and to allow the State to have access to the site, provide appropriate security measures, and address the environmental, health and safety issues. The order was issued based upon the licensee's failure to comply with State regulations and conditions of the license.

The licensee has almost 8000 metric tons of radioactive waste on site, on-site soil and groundwater contamination, damaged liners on two evaporation ponds, excessive inventories of licensed material, and has failed to provide adequate security at the site. The licensee also failed to adjust the financial assurance funds as required by the State.

The State has requested assistance from the US EPA, and EPA representatives and State representatives are currently on-site. The State has contracted with a private firm to provide 24 hour, around the clock security.

Region II received initial notification of this occurrence by telephone from the Division of Waste Management. This information has been discussed with the State and is current as of Thursday, June 27, 2002.

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