

April 11, 2003

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-III-03-018

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

Facility Name: Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant
Licensee: USEC
City, State: Paducah, KY
Docket: 07007001
Certificate: GDP-1

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

SUBJECT: TRAFFIC ACCIDENT INVOLVING URANIUM HEXAFLUORIDE CYLINDERS

DESCRIPTION:

At approximately 2:00 p.m. Central Daylight Time (CDT) on April 10, 2003, a Tri-State Motor Transport tractor-trailer, carrying five 2 ½-ton cylinders of enriched uranium hexafluoride overturned in the eastbound lanes of Interstate Highway 40, approximately 20 miles west of Knoxville, Tennessee. The cylinders of uranium hexafluoride were in transit between the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant, in Paducah, Kentucky and the Global Nuclear Fuels-Americas, in Wilmington, North Carolina.

The accident did not result in any personal injuries, breach of any cylinders, or releases of uranium hexafluoride. Two of the transportation overpacks, used to protect each of the cylinders, were slightly damaged.

In response to the accident, the United States Enrichment Corporation (USEC), shipper of the material, and the Tri-State Motor Transport Company, owner of the tractor-trailer, activated their Emergency Operations Centers to monitor the accident and to provide any necessary assistance.

Also in response to the event, the City of Knoxville and State of Tennessee emergency services personnel, and the Department of Energy's Radiological Assistance Team located at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, responded to the scene. The Radiological Assistance Team provided on-scene information to both the State of Tennessee and the NRC. The NRC Region III Office monitored the event from its inception with the assistance of the resident inspectors located at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant and two NRC Region II resident inspectors who responded to the accident scene.

At approximately 9:00 p.m. (CDT) on April 10, the shipment was uprighted and transported to a storage yard, used by the transporter and located at the East Tennessee Technology Park (formerly Oak Ridge National Laboratory). The NRC Region II inspectors accompanied the shipment to the storage yard and verified it was appropriately controlled, stored, and monitored.

This event has received significant media coverage. The Headquarter's Operations Office, States of Tennessee and Kentucky, and Region II were notified. A Commissioner's Technical Assistant briefing on the event was conducted at approximately 6:00 p.m. (CDT) by the Region III management and staff.

The information presented herein has been reviewed with USEC management.

The above information is current as of 9:00 a.m. (CDT) on April 11, 2003.

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