

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF NUCLEAR MATERIAL SAFETY AND SAFEGUARDS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555

February 1, 1993

NRC INFORMATION NOTICE 93-07: CLASSIFICATION OF TRANSPORTATION EMERGENCIES

Addressees

All Licensees required to have an emergency plan.

Purpose

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission is issuing this information notice to alert licensees of a recent incident where the classification of a transportation accident was confusing and misleading. It is expected that licensees will review this information for applicability to their licensed activities and consider actions, as appropriate, to avoid similar problems. However, suggestions contained in this notice do not constitute any new NRC requirements, and no written response is required.

Description of Circumstances

On December 16, 1991, a truck carrying unirradiated (fresh) nuclear fuel was involved in an accident in Massachusetts. The fuel was being shipped from a fuel fabrication plant in North Carolina, to a reactor in Vermont. The fuel shipment consisted of 24 fresh fuel assemblies, packaged 2 each, in 12 shipping containers.

As a result of the accident, the truck and shipping containers carrying the fresh fuel were engulfed in a fire that lasted for almost 3 hours. The shipper declared a "Site Emergency" and responded in accordance with its emergency plan. Despite the collision and subsequent fire, there were no deaths nor serious injuries. However, the accident did result in substantial property loss, which included the truck, shipping containers, and damaged fuel assemblies.

After the incident, NRC staff reviewed the emergency response measures taken. The results were reported in NUREG-1458, "Emergency Response to a Highway Accident in Springfield, Massachusetts, on December 16, 1991." This report concluded that the shipper's classification "is confusing since it does not have the same meaning as a site emergency for a fixed facility. Consideration should be given to developing a standard classification for transportation events that has its own terminology."

Discussion

The emergency classifications defined in 10 CFR Parts 30, 40, 50, and 70 are intended for emergencies at a fixed site (i.e., the licensee's facility). When a Notification Of Unusual Event (NOUE), Alert, or Site Area Emergency is declared, the licensee is required to immediately notify offsite response

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agencies responsible for taking actions to protect the public within a few miles of the licensee's facility. Declaring an NOUE, Alert, or Site Area Emergency for a transportation accident tens or hundreds of miles away from a licensee's facility causes unnecessary confusion among offsite response agencies.

After considering the need to develop a standard classification for transportation events, the staff concluded that a rulemaking to establish an additional emergency classification was not warranted. Most transportation accidents are reported by licensees that are not required by regulation to have an emergency plan. The cause of the confusion in the Springfield accident was the classification of an offsite emergency using the scheme established in the regulations for an onsite emergency. Only licensees required to have an emergency plan would tend to use this classification scheme. Therefore the staff believes that making licensees with emergency plans aware of the potential for confusion and having NRC licensing staff determine how transportation accidents are classified in future reviews of emergency plans is sufficient to address this problem.

Licensees required to maintain an emergency plan may want to review their emergency classification procedures and consider the need to establish a separate classification (e.g., transportation emergency) for offsite transportation accidents that require activation of the licensee's emergency organization.

This information notice requires no specific action or written response. If you have any questions about the information in this notice, please contact the technical contact listed below or the appropriate regional office.

Richard E. Cunningham

Richard E. Cunningham, Director
Division of Industrial and
Medical Nuclear Safety
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Technical contact: Kevin M. Ramsey, NMSS
(301) 504-2534

Attachments:

1. List of Recently Issued NMSS Information Notices
2. List of Recently Issued NRC Information Notices

See File jacket

LIST OF RECENTLY ISSUED
NMSS INFORMATION NOTICES

Information Notice No.	Subject	Date of Issuance	Issued to
93-05	Locking of Radiography Exposure Devices	01/14/93	All Nuclear Regulatory Commission industrial radiography licensees.
93-04	Investigation and Reporting of Misadministrations by the Radiation Safety Officer	01/07/93	All U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission medical licensees.
93-03	Recent Revision to 10 CFR Part 20 and Change of Implementation Date to January 1, 1994	01/05/93	All byproduct, source, and special nuclear material licensees.
92-84	Release of Patients Treated with Temporary Implants	12/17/92	All Nuclear Regulatory Commission Medical Licensees.
92-72	Employee Training and Shipper Registration Requirements for Transporting Radioactive Materials	10/18/92	All U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Licensees.
92-62	Emergency Response Information Requirements for Radioactive Material Shipments	08/24/92	All U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Licensees.
92-58	Uranium Hexafluoride Cylinders - Deviations in Coupling Welds	08/12/92	All fuel cycle licensees.
92-38	Implementation Date for the Revision to the EPA Manual of Protective Action Guides and Protective Actions for Nuclear Incidents	05/12/92	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors, non-power reactors and materials licensees authorized to possess large quantities of radioactive material.

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February 1, 1993
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LIST OF RECENTLY ISSUED
NRC INFORMATION NOTICES

Information Notice No.	Subject	Date of Issuance	Issued to
93-06	Potential Bypass Leakage Paths Around Filters Installed in Ventilation Systems	01/22/93	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
93-05	Locking of Radiography Exposure Devices	01/14/93	All Nuclear Regulatory Commission industrial radiography licensees.
93-04	Investigation and Reporting of Misadministrations by the Radiation Safety Officer	01/07/93	All U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission medical licensees.
93-03	Recent Revision to 10 CFR Part 20 and Change of Implementation Date to January 1, 1994	01/05/93	All byproduct, source, and special nuclear material licensees.
93-02	Malfunction of A Pressurizer Code Safety Valve	01/04/93	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
93-01	Accuracy of Motor-Operated Valve Diagnostic Equipment Manufactures by Liberty Technologies	01/04/93	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
92-86	Unexpected Restriction to Thermal Growth of Reactor Coolant Piping	12/24/92	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
92-85	Potential Failures of Emergency Core Cooling Systems Caused by Foreign Material Blockage	12/23/92	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
92-84	Release of Patients Treated with Temporary Implants	12/17/92	All Nuclear Regulatory Commission Medical Licensees

OL - Operating License
CP - Construction Permit

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

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NAME	KRamsey/kr/11		EKraus		GPangburn		FCombs
DATE	11/19/92		11/20/92		11/19/92		11/19/92

OFC	SGTB*	N	NR*	N	IMNS*	N	IMNS
NAME	CMacDonald		RErickson		JGreeves		RECunningham
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