

CROW BUTTE RESOURCES, INC.

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December 8, 2003

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Document Control Desk
Washington, DC 20555

Subject: Report Required Under 10 CFR § 40.60
Source Materials License SUA-1534
Docket Number 40-8943

Dear Sir:

This written report is filed as required by NRC regulations contained in 10 CFR §40.60(c)(2). On November 19, 2003, a contractor employee was injured at the Crow Butte Uranium Project operated by Crow Butte Resources, Inc. (CBR) under Source Materials License SUA-1534. The employee was potentially contaminated and required transportation to an outside medical facility. In accordance with the reporting requirements of 10 CFR §40.60(b)(3), the event was reported to the NRC Operations Center on November 20, 2003 at 0816 Mountain Standard Time (MST) (Event Number 40342). Additional notifications were made on the same date to NRC Region IV and the NRC Headquarters Project Manager assigned to CBR. A description of the event and the information required in 10 CFR §40.60(c)(2) follows.

On November 19, 2003 at approximately 1400 MST, a contractor employee was helping to dismantle the yellowcake dryer deck when he fell approximately 5 feet from an 8 foot A-frame ladder. Injuries to the contractor employee included a fractured right shoulder, slight abrasion to his right cheek, and a sore right thigh. The accident occurred in the dryer room located in the Central Plant at the Crow Butte Uranium Project.

According to witnesses, the contractor employee had just completed pushing a piece of red channel iron across the top of the dryer shell when the accident occurred. The victim was wearing a fall protection harness, but was moving down the ladder and was not tied off at the time of the accident. The contractor employee stated that he did not fall from the ladder but that he felt one of the legs begin to "buckle" or "twist" under him. Based on CBR inspections and the statement of the contractor employee, there was no apparent damage to the ladder before the accident.

The CBR accident investigation has not identified the cause of the accident with certainty. The employee was apparently exercising appropriate ladder use techniques at the time of the accident. The following possible contributing factors were identified:

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1. The dryer room floor is sloped to a sump and it is difficult to set up an A-frame ladder in some locations in a stable configuration;
2. Material on the dryer room floor at the time may have interfered with the stability of the ladder; and
3. The contractor employee reached for a steel beam for balance, which may have contributed to destabilize the ladder.

Five CBR and contractor employees were in the dryer room at the time of the incident, but did not witness it directly. The CBR Radiation Safety Officer (RSO) and a CBR electrician were in the dryer room and rushed to help the victim. The CBR electrician, who is also a volunteer Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), provided immediate patient care until the Emergency Response Team (ERT) from Crawford arrived.

Upon arriving at the scene, the four person ERT from the Crawford Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD) placed a stabilization collar around the contractor employee's neck and moved him from the dryer room to the ambulance. Due to the nature of the patient's potential injuries, removal of his potentially contaminated protective coveralls and normal contamination survey requirements were not deemed advisable. The CBR RSO followed the rescue unit to Chadron Community Hospital to provide radiological control support during transport and treatment.

When the patient had been treated, the RSO performed thorough contamination surveys of the ERT members, the emergency room staff, the rescue unit, the emergency room, and the patient's body and clothing. The survey consisted of an alpha contamination survey for soluble natural uranium since this is the radionuclide present in the dryer room. No radioactive contamination above the release criteria of 1,000 DPM/100 cm² was noted with the exception of the protective coveralls and boots worn by the contractor employee and the knee and shoes of one ERT member. The maximum removable contamination level of 2,003 DPM/100 cm² was noted on the right boot of the patient. The ERT member apparently became contaminated when she was kneeling in the dryer room to assist the patient.

All radioactive contamination was removed. Contaminated materials and all disposable medical supplies (e.g., latex gloves) were recovered by the RSO and returned to the site for disposal as byproduct material. The potential exposure to the contaminated individuals is minimal since natural uranium does not present an external radiological hazard and there was no indication of potential internal exposure due to ingestion or inhalation.

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A review of ladder use on sloped floors at the Crow Butte Uranium Project is underway by the industrial safety department and the CBR Safety Committee. No corrective actions have been noted for the radiological protection program. The hospital personnel had been briefed of the potential for receiving a contaminated patient, most recently in 1999. Hospital and emergency response personnel did not have any concerns during a debriefing held by the RSO. CBR has determined that contaminated clothing will be removed and surveys performed whenever possible, but that these actions will be governed by the emergency response personnel on a case-by-case basis. This policy is reflected in the facility emergency plans.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (308) 665-2215.

Sincerely,
CROW BUTTE RESOURCES, INC.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Griffin', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Michael L. Griffin
Manager of Health, Safety, and Environmental Affairs

cc: Mr. Dwight Chamberlain, Director
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