

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-II-03-022

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.

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Licensee Emergency Classification</u>
Honeywell International, Inc. Metropolis, IL	Notification of Unusual Event Alert
Docket/License No.: 040-3392/SUB-526	X Site Area Emergency General Emergency Not Applicable

Subject: URANIUM HEXAFLUORIDE RELEASE

At approximately 2:24 a.m. (CST) there was a uranium hexafluoride (UF₆) leak from a valve in their chemical process. The release was confirmed to have been terminated at approximately 3:20 a.m. (CST). Uranium hexafluoride is a hazardous chemical with low level radioactivity associated with the uranium component of the chemical.

Honeywell declared a site area emergency at 3:00 a.m. (CST). Fence line monitors indicated the possibility of a material release offsite. Local authorities evacuated approximately 25 people near the plant and approximately 75 people remained sheltered in their homes. Three individuals were taken to the hospital. Two of these individuals have been released. There were no injuries onsite. The offsite all clear notice was given at 4:45 a.m. (CST), and at 6:50 a.m. (CST) the emergency was downgraded from a site area emergency to recovery.

The licensee has taken air samples and is evaluating the amount of material released. The NRC resident inspector from the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant responded to the site and is monitoring the licensee's actions from the emergency operations center. An NRC inspector and supervisor have responded from Atlanta, Georgia, and are on the way to the site. The NRC is also monitoring the licensee's actions from the NRC Headquarters' Operations Center and the Atlanta Incident Response Center. The Operations Center and the Incident Response Center are in the monitoring phase of the normal mode of operations. The State of Illinois has been notified.

There has been media interest and the licensee has responded to media inquiries.

The NRC received initial notification of this occurrence by phone from Honeywell at 4:10 a.m. (CST) on December 22, 2003. This information presented herein has been discussed with the licensee and is current as of 7:25 a.m. (CST), December 22, 2003.

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