



**UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION II
SAM NUNN ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
61 FORSYTH STREET SW SUITE 23T85
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8931**

December 22, 2003

CAL No. 2-2003-003

Mr. Rory J. O'Kane
Plant Manager
Honeywell Specialty Chemicals
P. O. Box 430
Metropolis, IL 62690

SUBJECT: CONFIRMATORY ACTION LETTER

Dear Mr. O'Kane:

On December 22, 2003, at approximately 2:24 a.m. (CST), Honeywell experienced a uranium hexafluoride leak from a valve in your chemical process. This release had offsite consequences, and local authorities evacuated approximately 25 people near the plant, while approximately 75 people were sheltered in their homes. Honeywell's process controls should have prevented any release of material from the feed materials building. These controls failed or were ineffective.

Pursuant to a telephone conversation between yourself and me on December 22, 2003, it is our understanding that you have taken the following actions:

- 1) Honeywell has shutdown uranium hexafluoride operations at the site.
- 2) Honeywell has initiated an investigation to determine the root causes and extent of condition for the December 22, 2003, uranium hexafluoride release.
- 3) You will discuss the results of the investigation and the proposed corrective actions with the NRC prior to restart of the uranium hexafluoride processes.

Pursuant to Section 182 of the Atomic Energy Act, 42 U.S.C. 2232, you are required to:

- 1) Notify me immediately if your understanding differs from that set forth above; and
- 2) Notify me in writing when you have completed the actions addressed in this Confirmatory Action Letter.

Issuance of this Confirmatory Action Letter does not preclude issuance of an order formalizing the above commitments or requiring other actions on the part of the licensee; nor does it preclude the NRC from taking enforcement action for violations of NRC requirements that may have prompted the issuance of this letter. In addition, failure to take the actions addressed in this Confirmatory Action Letter may result in enforcement action.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.790 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter, and your response will be made available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room or from the NRC's document system (ADAMS), accessible from the NRC Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. To the extent possible, your response should not include any personal privacy, proprietary, or safeguards information so that it can be made available to the Public without redaction. If personal privacy or proprietary information is necessary to provide an acceptable response, then please provide a bracketed copy of your response that identifies the information that should be protected and a redacted copy of your response that deletes such information. If you request withholding of such material, you must specifically identify the portions of your response that you seek to have withheld and provide in detail the bases for your claim of withholding (e.g., explain why the disclosure of information will create an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy or provide the information required by 10 CFR 2.790(b) to support a request for withholding confidential commercial or financial information). If safeguards information is necessary to provide an acceptable response, please provide the level of protection described in 10 CFR 73.21.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Douglas M. Collins, Director
 Division of Fuel Facility Inspection

Docket No. 040-3392
 License No. SUB-526

cc: Gary Wright
 State of Illinois
 Department of Nuclear Safety

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