



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

REGION III  
801 WARRENVILLE ROAD  
LISLE, ILLINOIS 60532-4351

May 5, 2000

MEMORANDUM TO: Brent Clayton, Enforcement/Investigations Officer, EICS  
FROM: *Cynthia D. Pederson*  
Cynthia D. Pederson, Director, DNMS  
SUBJECT: REVIEW OF DOCUMENT FROM ANONYMOUS  
CONCERNED INDIVIDUAL, ALLEGATION  
NO. RIII-2000-A-0082 (HONEYWELL) (AITS M00-4148)

In response to your request dated April 14, 2000, division staff have completed their review of a letter from an anonymous concerned individual (CI) regarding activities at Honeywell Speciality Chemicals (formerly known as Allied-Signal) in Metropolis, Illinois. The CI indicated that he/she was concerned about recent media articles in the local Metropolis, Illinois area.

Our conclusions regarding the CI's specific concerns indicated that the concerns are somewhat general and vague, however, the general areas of the CI's concerns are routinely reviewed during our routine inspection program, e.g., airborne releases of UF<sub>6</sub>, worker bioassay results and radioactive waste issues. Our review and conclusion to each of the four concerns are as follows:

**Groundwater contamination from sludge pond leaks**

We are not aware of any groundwater contamination involving NRC licensed materials. In December 1999 we reviewed the licensee's ground water monitoring program and did not identify any adverse trends that would indicate that NRC licensed materials were contaminating the groundwater (Inspection Report 040-03392/99004(DNMS)). During our February 2000 inspection our inspector looked at each holding pond reviewed data collected, and discussed the licensee's pond closure plans with plant supervision. Pond "A" is a calcium fluoride holding pond that was originally built with a single liner and has been leaking calcium fluoride for over 10 years. According to the licensee small quantities of uranium (<600 parts per million (PPM)) have been found in the clay liner. Recently the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) relinquished its jurisdiction over the chemical holding ponds to the Illinois EPA. Currently the Illinois EPA is working with the licensee to resolve this issue and oversee the pond closure. We recommend that this issue be referred to the Illinois EPA for followup.

**Unannounced and Unreported releases (UF<sub>6</sub> and iodine pentafluoride)**

During 1999, Honeywell reported three events; however, two of the three events were not reportable events. In December 1999, we also reviewed a similar allegation that the licensee did not report a UF<sub>6</sub> release which was not substantiated (Inspection Report 040-03392/99004(DNMS)). In February 2000, the licensee also reported an iodine pentafluoride line rupture and again this event was not required to be reported to the NRC. Therefore, we have no reason to believe that the licensee has had unreported releases of

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hazardous materials to the atmosphere. In addition, the allegation is vague and non-specific. We recommend this concern be closed.

**Inaccurate and false biological sampling of workers**

Bioassay records are routinely reviewed during our health physics inspections. Prior to March 2000, all weekly and monthly urine bioassay results were conservatively calculated using an administrative minimum detectable limit (MDL) of 2 mg/ml (2.0 PPB (parts per billion)) which equates to a calculated dose of 308 mrem (internal dose). The licensee was concerned that this calculated dose appeared higher than other licensees doing similar activities and discussed this issue with other licensee's doing similar work with natural uranium and UF<sub>6</sub> and concluded that their assigned dose (308 mrem) was an over estimate and should be reduced to approximately half that amount (154 mrem). Therefore, all bioassay results prior to March 2000, were overestimates of internal exposure. If this is what the CI is referring to, we do not consider the overestimated bioassay results "inaccurate and/or false biological sampling." We are scheduled to conduct a routine inspection at the licensee's facility in June 2000. During that routine inspection, a review of the biological sampling program and the resultant dose estimate will be performed. Any discrepancies noted will be documented in the inspector's report. Based on the concern being vague and non-specific, we recommend the concern be closed.

**Radioactive drums and pallets being compiled- and buried underground**

During our last inspection in February 2000, we confirmed that the licensee is collecting and compiling wood pallets and metal drums for the purpose of waste disposal. Our inspector observed the truck loading of wood chips from pallets and transfer of those chips to a waste broker for disposal. Our inspector also discussed with the licensee their plans to dispose of their excess empty barrels. The licensee is also aware of rumors that Allied-Signal may have buried contaminated barrels somewhere on their 800 acre site years ago (1950's), however, according to the health physics group, they have never been able to substantiate this rumor. We recommend that this issue be closed unless additional information becomes available to assist our staff in the resolution of this concern.

We will be prepared to discuss this matter at the next scheduled Allegation Review Board.

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