

October 25, 2006

*This Event is not for public disclosure per Agreement State request until 10/30/06*

**PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-III-06-021**

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 the Region III staff on this date.

Facility

Ohmart Vega Corporation  
Cincinnati, OH  
License No.: 03214310020  
(Agreement State licensee)

Licensee Emergency Classification

Notification of Unusual Event  
 Alert  
 Site Area Emergency  
 General Emergency  
 Not Applicable

SUBJECT: BREACHED CESIUM-137 SOURCES

DESCRIPTION:

On October 23, 2006, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) notified the NRC Operations Center of a contamination event involving two breached cesium-137 sources at Ohmart Vega Corporation, in Cincinnati, Ohio. The licensee notified ODH of the event on October 20, 2006.

A licensee employee, working alone in the Source Disposal Room, was attempting to remove two separate sources, containing 11 and 26 millicuries of cesium-137, respectively, from TN Model 5178/5178A source holders in returned industrial gauges. The gauges were approximately 30 years old. The employee misunderstood the location of the sources in the source holders and, as a result, proceeded to cut the 11 mCi source with a band saw, while simultaneously drilling into the 26 mCi source. The source breaching resulted in contamination throughout the Source Disposal Room.

Some contamination escaped from the room under two doors leading to the licensee's gauge manufacturing area, but not into any unrestricted areas. Preliminary surveys identified 14,000 to 500,000 dpm in large sample wipe tests of walkways in the manufacturing area. The employee had cesium-137 contamination on his hands, hair and clothing. Ear and nose swab samples were negative. He underwent onsite decontamination which reduced personal contamination, and was taken to a local hospital as a precautionary measure. The hospital performed additional decontamination resulting in slight fixed contamination remaining on his hands. Two urinalysis samples collected from the employee were negative. A whole body count is planned for October 26, 2005.

The licensee hired a decontamination contractor, who arrived onsite on October 23, 2006. The contractor has sealed off the Source Disposal Room and is performing characterization and decontamination surveys in the manufacturing area. Surveys of the ventilation system were negative.

ODH inspectors initiated an investigation at the licensee facility on October 25, 2006. That investigation is continuing. Region III (Chicago) is monitoring the State's investigation and has offered assistance to the State, if needed.

Region III informed the Office of the Executive Director, the Office of Federal and State Materials and Environmental Management Programs, and the Region's Public Affairs Office of this incident.

The information in this Preliminary Notification was reviewed with the State. This information is current as of 3:00 p.m. (CST) on October 25, 2006.

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