

STATE OF NEW YORK - DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

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FOI/PA 1008-0145

TO: Karim Rimawi, Director  
Bureau of Environmental Radiation Protection

FROM: Elaine S. Carter, Assoc. Radiological Health Specialist  
Rochester Regional Office

SUBJECT: COBALT-60 CONTAMINATION  
(b)(6) Neutron Products, Inc.  
February 22 - 24, 1989, in Rochester, NY Area  
(See Problem Alert Document #90550796)

DATE: February 27, 1989

This memo reports on an incident of potential radioactive material contamination of locations in the Rochester, New York, area on February 22-24, 1989, (b)(6) of Neutron Products, Inc. (NPI), Dickerson, Maryland 20842. As described below, four articles of (b)(6) clothing were found contaminated with Cobalt-60 (which (b)(6) routinely works with at NPI), but radiation surveys found no evidence of contamination in the locations (b)(6) frequented during his Rochester stay.

At 2:30 p.m. on February 24, 1989, this Office was notified by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), Bureau of Environmental Radiation Protection (BERP) that Cobalt-60 (Co-60) contamination had been found on clothing (b)(6) by Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation (RG&E) on February 23, 1989, when (b)(6) received routine exit radiation monitoring before leaving the RG&E Ginna Nuclear Power Station, Ontario, New York, (Wayne County) after a meeting. RG&E staff located two hot particles on two articles of (b)(6) clothing. The particles were able to be removed, the clothing dry cleaned and returned (b)(6) and the incident reported to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). On February 24, 1989, the NRC requested assistance from BERP to locate (b)(6) and conduct radiation surveys of all his belongings, any rental vehicles he used, and locations he frequented during his stay in Rochester.

A. The following actions were taken:

1. By 3:15 p.m., February 24, 1989, John McEnath, NRC Region II, was able to provide information that (b)(6) was enroute to the Greater Rochester International Airport for a 4:30 p.m. flight to Washington, D.C., and the RG&E contact person was Robert McCreedy, General Manager, Nuclear Production.

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2. Mr. McCready reported that Thomas Powell, RG&E, Risk Management, had been dispatched to the Airport to intercept (b)(6) for further radiation monitoring.
3. James Nickerson, NYSDOH, Rochester Regional Office (RRO), working with the Monroe County Sheriff's Office (S.O.) at the Airport, was able to radio Mr. Powell after he located (b)(6) and have (b)(6) brought to the NYSDOH RRO.
4. The ground floor conference room was prepared for surveying by covering a large table area with plastic sheets. All articles were spread on this prior to survey.
5. Once (b)(6) was at the RRO (before 4:30 p.m.) a radiation survey of all his belongings was made. Two articles of clothing were found to be contaminated: an area on the seat of the trousers (b)(6) was wearing and the sleeve of a shirt worn by Mr. (b)(6) (See Table I for all survey results.) These articles were labeled, bagged, and given to Bernard Quinn, RG&E Health Physicist, for decontamination. (b)(6)
6. (b)(6) Rochester itinerary was obtained. See below.
7. Information on the rental car was given to Mr. Nickerson, who was able to have the Airport Sheriff's Office staff impound the car. Mr. McCready dispatched Mike Harrison, RG&E Health Physics Technician from Ginna to the Airport to perform a radiation survey of the car. Mr. Quinn later reported to Karim Rimawi, Director, BERP, that no survey readings above background were noted.
8. Mr. Powell's RG&E vehicle, used to bring (b)(6) from the Airport to the RRO was surveyed. Again, with negative results.
9. A radiation survey of (b)(6) hotel accommodations was made. (b)(6) spent two nights in Room 318 at the Rochester Marriott Inway hotel, 5257 West Henrietta Road, P.O. Box 9912, Rochester, New York 14623. A sketch of the room and the survey areas is attached. No radiation measurements above background were noted. As well as floor areas, chair seats and bed spreads were surveyed.
10. A survey was made of the dining room booth in the hotel restaurant "Petals," where (b)(6) sat for breakfast on both February 23, 1989, and February 24, 1989.

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11. As a final precautionary measure, a recommendation was made to Mr. Pero to have Room 318 thoroughly cleaned, including bedspreads and carpet. He agreed to arrange this.

B. The following information is known of (b)(6) itinerary:

February 22, 1989

1. Arrived Greater Rochester International Airport, early evening.
2. Picked up rental car at Avis.
3. Registered Marriot Hotel, Room 318.
  - a) Dinner in room from Hotel Room Service.
  - b) Used both chairs.
  - c) Hung clothes.
  - d) Showered rather than bathed.
  - e) Slept in one bed on first night, second bed on second night.

February 23, 1989

1. Breakfast in "Petals" Hotel restaurant, sat in center booth to left of entrance on south side of table.
2. Travelled to RG&E Ginna plant in rental car to attend meeting of Nuclear Safety Audit and Review Board at plant administrative offices.
3. Lunch on plant site.
4. When leaving the plant, set off exit monitors; suit trousers and muffler relinquished for decontamination.
5. Return to hotel.(?)
6. Dinner at Joseph's, 169 Chestnut Street, Rochester, New York, in second floor dining room, with RG&E personnel.
7. Return to Marriot.

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February 24, 1989

1. Breakfast at "Petals," sat in same seat in dining room.
2. Went to RG&E downtown offices.
3. Lunch at RG&E cafeteria at 89 East Avenue.
4. At some point, travelled to Ginna to retrieve decontaminated clothes.
5. Mid-afternoon, returned to airport.

**C. Additional information provided by RG&E staff:**

1. Radiation surveys at Ginna on February 23, 1989, of locations Mr. (b)(6) was in did not find evidence of contamination.
2. Similar surveys on February 24, 1989, at RG&E downtown locations where (b)(6) spent time did not find any radiation levels above background.
3. Dave Burke, RG&E, telephoned an initial report on the problem to both the Monroe County and the Wayne County Offices of Disaster Preparedness.

**D. Additional information provided by Ed Pero, General Manager, Rochester Marriot Thruway, or observed during radiation survey at the hotel on February 24, 1989:**

1. By the time the hotel was notified of the possible problem by Dr. Rimawi, Room 318 had been rented (b)(6) who were in the room (b)(6) about one hour.
2. Once requested to move, the (b)(6) were able to move within a few minutes. (Only the bed pillows appeared disturbed at the time of the survey.)
3. (b)(6) had intended to use a gift certificate to pay the hotel charges. (b)(6) returned their certificate, arranged for a suite upgrade and told them the weekend was "on the house."
4. Mr. Pero stated that he told the (b)(6) the room needed to be surveyed for possible contamination by the previous guest. He could not recall if he used the words "radioactive contamination."

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5. Mr. Pero stated that all the linen in the room and bath would have been changed between guests. Much of it would also have been changed February 23, 1989, during (b)(6)'s stay. He was not sure if the same housekeeping staff member would have cleaned the room both days.
6. The fabric covered booth banquette in "Petals," where (b)(6) ate breakfast is maintained by brushing down between diners.
7. The radiation survey of the banquette was done about 8:30 p.m., February 24, 1989, between diners. The restaurant was about 3/4 full. When one hotel employee asked Mr. Pero "what was going on?" he stated he didn't want to discuss it just then. He spoke to the employee further (out of the writer's hearing) a few minutes later.
8. Mr. Pero spoke with the (b)(6) after the room survey. They were having dinner in the restaurant. He stated they were comfortable with the information that the room was not contaminated and did not need to discuss it further. He gave them the writer's business card.

**E. Recommendations for improving response:**

1. First, information from BERP should have included a definite RG&E contact. The first call to RG&E was to Mr. Quinn, who could only report on what happened on February 23, 1989 and did not have information on the NRC's request or where (b)(6) was at the moment.
2. A briefing on the problem should have been given to all present at the RRO, probably about 5:00 p.m. Everyone trying to help would then have had complete information and been more effective. This might also have prevented items 3 and 4.
3. A direct call to Local Health Units should have been made from RRO staff much earlier, certainly by 4:00 p.m. on February 24, 1989. This should have been followed by regular updates.
4. A clearer understanding is needed of procedures used by Monroe County Health Department (MCHD) and Monroe County Sheriff's Office for keeping the Monroe County Office of Disaster Preparedness (OEP) informed of the status of such events. In spite of calls from RRO staff to both MCHD and OEP, the County Executive Office did not have complete information until mid-day February 25, 1989.

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5. Monroe County OEP staff are also very concerned about the fact that no reporting on the incident was made on February 23, 1989.

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ATTACHMENT

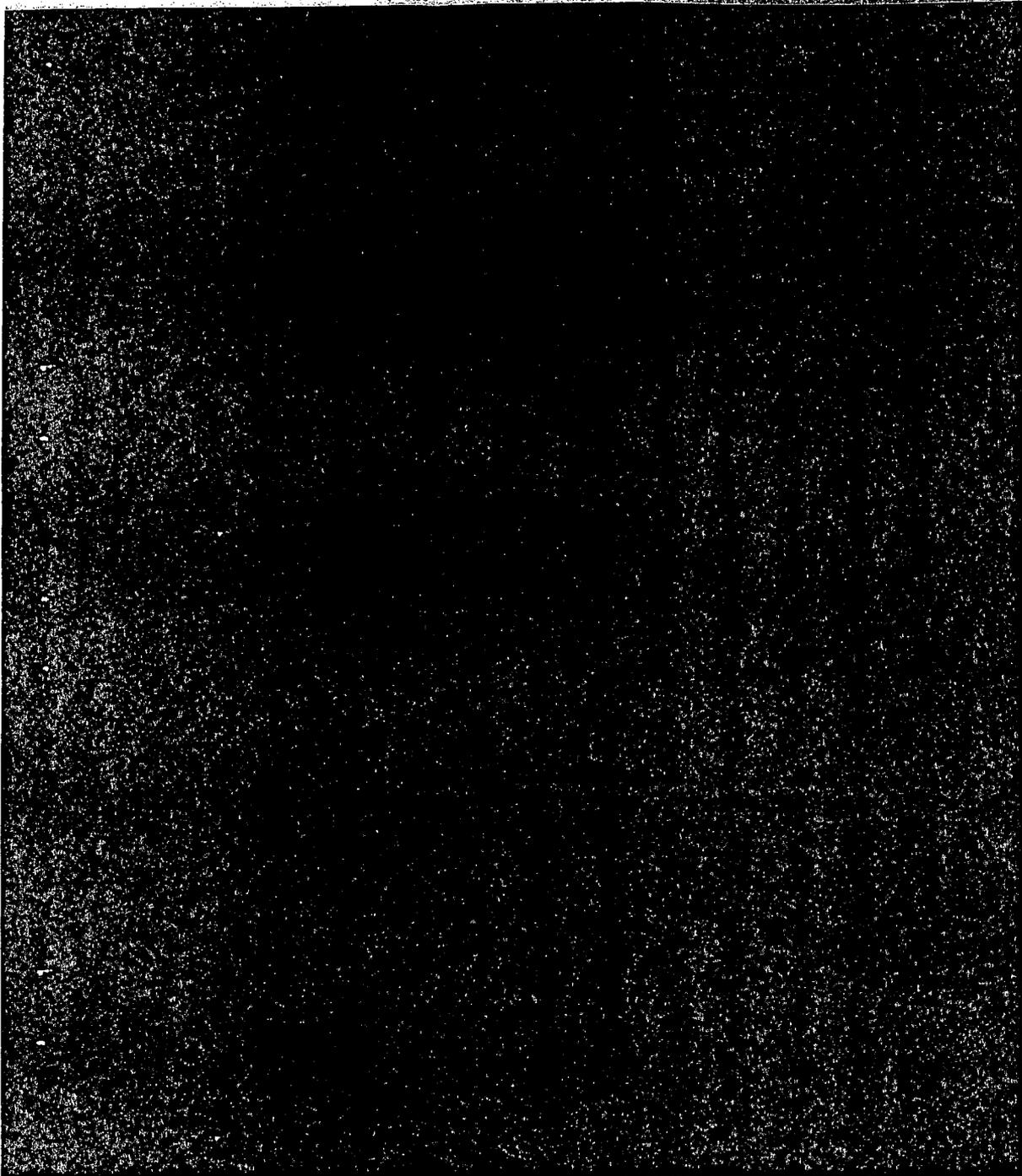
cc: John McGrath, NRC, Region II  
Robert McCready, General Manager Nuclear Production, RG&E  
Bernard Quinn, CHP, Corporate Health Physicist, RG&E  
Edward Pero, General Manager, Rochester Marriot Thruway  
Sande Macaluso, Acting Director, Monroe Cty. Office of Disaster Preparedness  
Thelma Wideman, Director, Wayne Ctv. Office of Disaster Preparedness  
(b)(6)  
Karim Harstad, Acting Regional Director of Environmental Health, NYSDOH  
Thomas Powell, Risk Management, RG&E  
Michael Linse, Director, Geneva District Office, NYSDOH  
Document #90580826

T A B L E I

\* Results of 2/24/89 Radiation Surveys of Belongings of (b)(6) and Locations (b)(6) Frequented 2/22-24/89 in Rochester, NY Area.

Items Surveyed	Survey Results	
	Ludlum * 14C cpm Bkg 20 - 80 cpm	Ludlum 19 microR/hr. Bkg 8- 12 R/hr.
<u>At the Rochester Regional Office</u>		
Outer garments		
rain coat .....	Bkg.....	Bkg
hat	↓	↓
blazer .....	Bkg	
dk grey trousers.....	2000 cpm	
underwear.....	Bkg	↓
muffler** .....		Bkg
Pocket Contents		
keys, travel tickets, pens, etc.	↓	
Suitcase Contents .....		
lt.blue long sleeve shirt .....	Bkg	
underwear.....	Bkg	
pajamas		
suit jacket & trousers**		
deck shoes		
handkerchiefs		
socks		
toilet case		
toilet case contents		
hair brush, tooth brush,		
medications, etc.		
Briefcase		
briefcase contents		
papers, cards, calculator, etc.		
Tom Powell's RG&E Vehicle		
plastic sheets used to protect		
RRO tables.....	Bkg	
<u>At the Rochester Marriott Thruway</u>		
Rm 318 (See Sketch)		
Floor Areas as shaded.....		Bkg
bath tub		

\*\* Items found by RG&E to be contaminated with Co-60 on 2/23/89  
Prepared on 2/27/89 by Elaine S. Carter, Rochester Regional Office



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