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SUBJECT: PNO-III-97-086: on 971015, contract worker alarmed radiation monitor upon exiting plant radiologically controlled area. Identified source of contamination on inside of workers shoe. Contamination occurred prior to arrival on site.

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October 17, 1997

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-III-97-086

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 III staff (Lisle, Illinois) on this date.

Facility	Licensee Emergency Classification
Indiana	Notification of Unusual Event
Michigan Electric Co.	Alert
Cook 1 2	Site Area Emergency
Bridgman, Michigan	General Emergency
Dockets: 50-315, 50-316	X Not Applicable

Subject: RADIATION EXPOSURE FROM SHOE CONTAMINATION

On October 15, 1997, a contract worker alarmed a radiation monitor as he exited from the plant's radiologically controlled area. Further surveys by the licensee identified the radiation source as contamination on the inside of one of the worker's shoes. The licensee has identified five discreet radioactive particles inside the shoe.

The individual has worked at several nuclear plants, most recently including a foreign reactor facility in August. At the conclusion of his work there, a whole body count identified an apparent uptake of radioactive material. A whole body count performed at the D.C. Cook facility earlier this month, prior to the individual beginning work, showed similar deposition of radioactive material.

The licensee's investigation has determined, however, that the source of the radioactivity measured in the whole body count was contamination in the worker's shoe rather than from internal deposition. A subsequent whole body count, without the individual wearing his shoes, showed minimal internal deposition of radioactive material.

Since the whole body count detected the radiation prior to any work at the D.C. Cook facility, the licensee has concluded that the shoe contamination occurred prior to the individual arriving at the site. Since the foreign reactor was the individual's most recent job site, it is a possible source of the contamination. Prior to working at the foreign reactor, the individual had worked at other U.S. reactor licensees, including one where he had also been contaminated. That licensee indicated to the D.C. Cook facility that the contamination had been removed prior to the worker leaving the site. The D.C. Cook radiation protection staff continue their review of the potential source of this radioactivity.

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Assuming the contamination originated at the individual's most recent job site, the foreign facility, was promptly transferred to the individual's shoe, and based on the time the individual has worn the shoe since working at the foreign facility, he received a radiation dose of about 83 rem to the skin of his foot. (The NRC occupational dose limit to the skin is 50 rem per year.) If the contamination occurred earlier or remained on his skin longer, the dose may have been higher. Although the contamination does not appear to have occurred at the D.C. Cook facility, the licensee has made a courtesy report to the NRC Operations Center.

On October 16, 1997, the licensee conducted radiological surveys of the individual's clothing, automobile, and local residence. No contamination was present.

The State of Michigan and the Environmental Protection Agency, Region V Office, have been notified. The NRC Office of International Programs has also been informed. The information in this preliminary notification has been reviewed with licensee management.

This information is current as of 7:30 am (CDT) on October 17, 1997.

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