

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION

September 26, 1979

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE--PNO-III-79-2

This preliminary notification constitutes EARLY notice of events of POSSIBLE safety or public interest significance. The information presented is as initially received without verification or evaluation and is basically all that is known by IE staff on this date.

Facility: Pacific Intermountain Express

Subject: TRUCK ACCIDENT INVOLVING URANIUM DIOXIDE

At 6:30 p.m. (MDT), September 25, 1979, a Pacific Intermountain Express tractor trailer caught fire near Beach, North Dakota. The vehicle was carrying unirradiated UO₂ from Westinghouse-Bettis to the Handord Engineering Development Laboratory.

North Dakota Disaster Services Agency and Public Health Department personnel went to the accident scene and performed a radiation survey. It was determined that the UO₂ container was undamaged and intact. The container label was slightly darkened. No release of radioactive material occurred.

The container was moved to the local fire station and secured in the basement. It will be picked up and shipped to its destination later by Westinghouse-Bettis.

Radio Station KPMR, Bismarck, North Dakota contacted DOE at about 1:00 a.m. (CDT) and was given all available information regarding the incident. Neither DOE nor Region III (Chicago) plans a press release. DOE has notified the State of Nevada and the USEPA Regional Office. The Office of Inspection and Enforcement (IE) notified the USDOT.

Region III received notification of this occurrence by telephone from the IE Duty Officer at 10:30 p.m., September 25, 1979. The Region III Incident Response Center was activated. Subsequent information was obtained during several contacts with the DOE Radiological Assistance Duty Officer, who was in contact with State and Westinghouse-Bettis personnel. The above information is current as of 6:30 a.m. (CDT), September 26, 1979.

This Preliminary Notification is issued for information only and no further action by IE is anticipated.

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