

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION

Date: November 28, 1979

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE--PNO-III-79-49

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: Kerr-McGee Chemical Co.
West Chicago, IL
License No. STA-583

POOR ORIGINAL

SUBJECT: REPORTED CONTAMINATION IN FORMERLY OWNED BUILDING IN WEST CHICAGO

Region III (Chicago) was informed in a telephone call from the Mayor of West Chicago Monday afternoon, November 26, 1979, that the owner of a building at 185 W. Washington Street, West Chicago, had detected radioactivity in the building. The building had been purchased several years earlier from Kerr-McGee. On Tuesday, November 27, 1979, a letter on the same matter was received from the State of Illinois.

On Tuesday afternoon, November 27, a supervisor from the Region III office made a survey of the building and discussed his findings with the owner of the building and the Mayor of West Chicago, who also had an office in the building. This survey shows no radiation levels likely to cause exposures in excess of NRC limits. Several spots in sewer pipes in the basement of the building appear to contain radioactivity above NRC release criteria for unrestricted use. Region III is pursuing this matter with Kerr McGee.

According to Region III records the building involved was used by Kerr-McGee and its previous owners as a sales office and research laboratory for thorium and rare earth chemicals. In 1974, it was released for unrestricted use and subsequently sold by Kerr-McGee.

Region III is not aware of media interest at the present time but Kerr-McGee's activities in West Chicago have had considerable media attention in the past. The State of Illinois has been informed. This information is current as of 11:30 a.m., November 28, 1979.

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