



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION V
1990 N. CALIFORNIA BOULEVARD
SUITE 202, WALNUT CREEK PLAZA
WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA 94596

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August 10, 1979

Docket No. 50-139

University of Washington
Seattle, Washington 98105

Attention: Dr. Dale Carlson

Gentlemen:

Enclosed is IE Bulletin No. 79-19 which requires action by you with regard to your reactor facility(ies) with an operating license.

Should you have questions regarding this Bulletin or the actions required of you, please contact this office.

Sincerely,

R. H. Engelken
for R. H. Engelken
Director

Enclosures:

1. IE Bulletin No. 79-19
2. List of Bulletins Issued
in Last Six Months

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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF INSPECTION AND ENFORCEMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555

August 10, 1979

IE Bulletin No. 79-19

PACKAGING OF LOW-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE FOR TRANSPORT AND BURIAL

Description of Circumstances:

Low-level radioactive waste is that waste which can be transferred and shipped to one of three waste burial facilities which are located in and licensed by the Agreement States of Nevada, South Carolina, and Washington. On July 10, 1979, the Governors of the three states notified NRC Chairman Hendrie of the serious and repeated disregard for rules governing the shipments of low-level radioactive wastes to these burial facilities.

Examples of violations of Agreement State, DOT and NRC rules follow:

Improperly packaged uranium fines igniting packaged liquid scintillation vials in combustible waste is believed to have caused a fire and destruction of a truck at the Beatty, Nevada burial facility on May 14, 1979.

On July 2, 1979, three of twelve steel containers shipped to the Beatty burial facility were found to be leaking radioactive material. The material was described on the bill of lading as being a solid inorganic salt (evaporator concentrates solidified with urea formaldehyde) from a reactor facility. The Governor of the State of Nevada ordered the drums to be shipped out of the state and the burial facility was temporarily closed.

On July 30, the first shipment into the reopened Beatty facility contained free liquid in "solid" material. The radioactive contents were sand filters used at an insitu leaching process at a uranium mill.

Forty-three shipments with sixty-three deficiencies were observed during the package inspection program between April 10 and July 5, 1979, by the Agreement State of South Carolina, at the Barnwell, S.C. burial facility. The shipments were from reactor, medical, industrial and military facilities.

On June 28, 1979, the Federal Highway Administration issued a Notice of Violation to a reactor facility proposing a \$10,000 fine for truck contamination resulting from improper closures of drums containing radioactive material and for improper loading of the drums on the truck.

These are a few examples of shipments to burial facilities which did not fully meet NRC requirements which were developed to protect the health of the Governors of the three States with licensees. If that if the situation is not rectified, the NRC would deny use of the three burial sites.

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