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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION I
631 PARK AVENUE
KING OF PRUSSIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19406

Docket No. 50-184

August 10, 1979

U. S. Department of Commerce
National Bureau of Standards
ATTN: Dr. R. S. Carter, Chief
Reactor Radiation Division
Washington, D.C. 20234

Gentlemen:

Enclosed is IE Bulletin No. 79-19, which requires action by you with regard to your reactor and/or 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. W. McDanghy
for Boyce H. Grier
Director

Enclosures:

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

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ENCLOSURE 1

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

IE Bulletin No. 79-19
Date: August 10, 1979
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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 on 55-gallon drums of LSA material and for improper loading of the drums on the vehicle.

These are a few examples of shipments which did not fully meet NRC, DOT developed to protect the health and three States with licensed burial is not rectified, they may have to three burial sites by violators.

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