U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

REGION V

Report No. 70-734/89-05

Docket No. 70-734

License No. SNM-696

Priority 0 Category ULFF Safeguards Group II

Licensee: General Atomics
P. O. Box 85608
San Diego, California 92138

Facility Name: Torrey Pines Mesa and Sorrento Valley Sites

Inspection at: San Diego, California

Inspection Conducted: October 11 and 16, 1989

Inspector: C. A. Hooker 11/6/89
C. A. Hooker, Fuel Facilities Inspector Date Signed

Approved by: R. Fish 11/6/89
R. Fish, Chief Date Signed
Emergency Preparedness Section

Summary:

a. Areas Inspected:

This was an announced inspection of activities involving a closeout inspection/surveys of certain General Atomics facilities and a routine inspection of waste generator requirements. The inspection also included tours of the licensee's facilities. Inspection procedures 30703, 83890 and 84850 were addressed.

b. Results:

In the areas inspected, the licensee's performance appeared adequate to accomplish their safety objectives. No violations or deviations were identified.

DETAILS

1. Persons Contacted

Licensee

* K. E. Asmussen, Manager, Licensing, Safety and Nuclear Compliance
L. R. Quintana, Manager, Health Physics
R. K. Krueger, Manager, TRIGA Fuel Fabrication
* R. P. Vanek, Manager, Nuclear Waste Processing Facility
* C. L. Wisham, Manager, Nuclear Materials Accountability
E. C. Rudgers, Health Physics Technician (HPT)
T. W. Keim, Senior Nuclear Fuel Waste Processor

NRC Contractor

P. R. Cotten, Oak Ridge Associate Universities (ORAU)

* Denotes those attending the exit interview on October 16, 1989.

In addition to the individuals noted above, the inspector met and held discussions with other members of the licensee's and NRC's contractor's staffs.

2. Closeout Inspection/Surveys (83890)

On October 11, 1989, the inspector interfaced with NRC contracted ORAU personnel who were conducting confirmatory radiological surveys of certain licensee facilities for ultimate release for unrestricted use. The surveys were being conducted (October 9-13, 1989) as the result of the licensee's letters dated August 31 and September 13, 1989, requesting confirmatory surveys of certain areas in Building 9 (Experimental Building - Stage 2) and Building 2 (L Building - Group 4). Surveys for Building 9 involved about 587 sq. ft. of the "Hot Suite" area previously used for TRIGA fuel fabrication. Surveys for Building 2 included 11 laboratories (3 with mezzanines) that consisted of about about 3749 sq. ft. total area. The following observations were made during this inspection:

(1) The inspector observed surveys being performed by ORAU personnel in rooms No. 40-43 and 47 of the "Hot Suite" area. The survey equipment being used was determined to be of the appropriate type and fully operational and survey techniques appeared adequate. The inspector noted two plugged openings (one about 3 inches in diameter and one about 1.5 inches in diameter) that appeared to be drains in the floor of room No. 40. The cement floor area around these openings had been chipped out by the licensee to remove contamination in this area prior to ORAU's surveys.

At the request of the inspector, a licensee HPT surveyed the openings. The 3 inch opening indicated a maximum of about 150 cpm with a thin window pancake probe. No detectable activity was noted at the 1.5 inch opening. When the material used to plug the 3 inch

opening was removed no detectable activity was observed on a second reading. Swipe tests from inside both openings also indicated no detectable activity.

The licensee could not readily confirm, at the time, what the openings had been previously used for. A cognizant licensee representative informed the inspector that he was sure the openings were not part of the old liquid drain line, and he would check facility drawings to confirm his belief. The inspector discussed the need to perform an adequate survey of the insides of these openings with the ORAU person in charge of the survey team, and the need to document the survey results in their report. On October 16, 1989, the inspector noted on a facility blue print that the 3 inch opening was part of a vacuum break system for the old drain system (previously released). The 1.5 inch line was determined to be an old electrical conduit pipe. The inspector had no further questions regarding these openings.

(2) The inspector toured the areas of Building 2 that had been surveyed earlier in the week by ORAU. Based on the tour and discussions with ORAU personnel, no concerns were identified.

The inspector also noted that some of the Labs previously released for unrestricted use by the NRC, had been leased from General Atomics (GA) by tenants that were using small quantities of radioactive material under their own state license. It was also noted that GA maintained a listing of these areas and the State materials being used. By letter dated October 19, 1989, the NRC informed GA of the need to submit a license amendment request to remove areas release to unrestricted use from their NRC license.

The review of ORAU's final survey report will be covered in a subsequent inspection (70-734/89-05-01). No violations or deviations were identified during this inspection.

3. Radioactive Waste Generator Requirements (8485C)

The inspector reviewed the licensee's radioactive waste program for compliance with the requirements of 10 CFR Parts 20 and 61. the inspection also included a tour of the licensee's waste processing facility and selected site areas where waste was collected.

Solid radioactive waste generated at various site areas is packaged and transferred to the Nuclear Waste Processing Facility (NWPF). Prior to each transfer, a Radioactive Material Transfer Request (RMTR) form was prepared and sent to the NWPF for review and acceptance. The RMTR form delineated the radioactive content, chemical form, type of hazardous material, and certification of waste content being transferred. Once accepted, compactable waste was compacted into bales which were placed in appropriate strong tight containers for ultimate disposal. Non-compactable waste was either disposed of in its original container (drums) or repackaged into metal boxes for disposal. Non-aqueous liquids were appropriately absorbed or solidified prior to disposal. Each

container was inspected by the Quality Control (QC) organization prior to and after sealing sealing their lids.

The inspector examined licensee procedures and records associated with five shipments of solid waste sent for commercial land burial during the period of May 30 through June 7, 1989. Based on these reviews and observations made during facility tours, the inspector determined that the licensee had classified waste pursuant to 10 CFR 61.55; that the waste met the characteristics of 10 CFR 61.56; and that the prepared waste manifest and marking of packages were in accordance with 10 CFR 20.311. Licensee inspections of waste handling and packaging were conducted in accordance with 10 CFR 20.311(d)(3). The licensee also maintained a current copy of the disposal site's License.

The licensee's performance in this area appeared adequate and their program seemed capable of meeting its safety objectives. No violations or deviations were identified.

11. Exit Interview (30703)

The inspector met with the licensee representatives, denoted in paragraph 1, at the conclusion of the inspection on October 16, 1989. The scope and findings of the inspection were summarized.

The licensee was informed that no apparent violations or deviations were identified.