

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION

Date: July 23, 1980

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE--PNO-I-80- 107

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: New England Nuclear Corporation
Billerica, Massachusetts
License No. 20-00320-13

Subject: SHIPMENT OF PACKAGE CONTAINING RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL WITHOUT PROPER D.O.T. LABEL

At 0900 on July 23, 1980, Region I received a report from the University of Pittsburgh that on July 18, 1980, they had received a package from New England Nuclear Corporation containing 1 millicurie of phosphorous-32 in aqueous solution on which surface radiation levels of 27 mR/hr were measured. The package had been shipped as a limited quantity under D.O.T. regulations and as such bore no external labeling identifying it as containing radioactive material. Upon opening the package, it was discovered that the inner container had leaked its contents to the outer plastic cup. Some contamination of the receiving facility resulted from opening this outer container.

This shipment was a replacement for a previous shipment which had been received 1-2 weeks previously, in which the inner container had similarly leaked, and on the surface of which radiation levels of approximately 17 mR/hr were measured. In neither case was there detectable contamination on the exterior of the package.

The Commonwealths of Pennsylvania and Massachusetts have been notified of this occurrence. Neither the licensee or Region I plans to issue a press release at this time. Region I will respond to inquiries from the news media.

Region I will conduct an on site inspection at the University of Pittsburgh on July 24, 1980, and at New England Nuclear Corporation on July 25, 1980.

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