

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION

1005
Date: September 3, 1980

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURENCE--PNO-III-80-167 Page 1 of 2

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 as of this date.

Facility: Purolator Courier
Midway Airport
Chicago, Illinois

Subject: CRASH OF AIRCRAFT TRANSPORTING RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL

Region III (Chicago) was informed on September 3, 1980 by the Purolator Company that a private aircraft carrying radioactive material had crashed near Midway Airport in Chicago. The Purolator representative that reported the accident stated the shipment contained 0.3 microcuries of carbon-14 and 5.0 microcuries of hydrogen-3. Based on this information Region III did not immediately dispatch personnel to the crash site since the amount of radioactive material reported to be in the shipment was exempt amounts.

The Chicago Fire Department contacted Region III and stated they were reluctant to remove the aircraft until a survey was made. Region III immediately dispatched personnel to the site.

Region III contacted the shipper, New England Nuclear and learned that the shipment, which was being sent to the University of Illinois at Urbana, Illinois, actually contained 5 vials of radioactive material which included: 6.5 millicuries of sulfur-35, 5.5 millicuries of hydrogen-3 and 0.75 millicuries of carbon-14.

Preliminary estimates by Region III indicate that ingestion of the carbon-14 and/or hydrogen-3 would not result in a significant exposure. Ingestion of the sulphur-35 would result in a significant exposure but it is unlikely this material would be ingested.

Region III personnel had located three of the five vials by 10:50 a.m. CDT and are continuing the search of the aircraft crash site for the remaining two vials. The three vials that were recovered appear to be intact.

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There has been news media interest and coverage of this event. Region III has been responding to news media but plans no press release at this time.

The State of Illinois has been informed.

Initial information was reported to Region III by Purolator at 7:15 a.m. CDT and this information is current as of 12:30 p.m. on September 3, 1980.

Contact: W. H. Schultz, RIII 384-2515

A. B. Davis, RIII 384-2510

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