

This preliminary notification constitutes EARLY notice of events of POSSIBLE safety or public interest significance. The information is as initially received without verification or evaluation, and is basically all that is known by the Region III staff on this date.

Facility: US Air	Licensee Emergency
Columbus, OH	Classification:
Non-Licensee	<input type="checkbox"/> Unusual Event
	<input type="checkbox"/> Alert
	<input type="checkbox"/> Site Area Emergency
	<input type="checkbox"/> General Emergency
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

Subject: SUSPECTED LEAKAGE FROM RADIOPHARMACEUTICAL SHIPMENT

At 8:16 p.m. (EST) on March 13, 1990, U.S. Air notified the National Response Center that a baggage handler observed possible damage and leakage from a radiopharmaceutical shipment he was unloading from a U.S. Air passenger aircraft at the Port Columbus Airport, Columbus, Ohio. State personnel, responding to the incident, subsequently determined that there was no radioactive leakage from the package and no contamination of persons or equipment. There was evidence, however, of fluid leakage from the package. The package was placed on a baggage cart and isolated in a freight warehouse.

The package contained a molybdenum-99 radiopharmaceutical generator being shipped from Cintichem, a State of New York licensee, to a hospital customer in Ohio. It was properly labeled. Radiation levels at the surface of the package were normal for such a shipment.

The National Response Center notified other agencies, including the Department of Energy (DOE). DOE notified the NRC at approximately 7:40 p.m. (CST). Representatives from the Ohio Radiological Health Program and Ohio Emergency Management Agency responded to the airport. Before the state personnel arrived, the two baggage handlers who had been in contact with the package showered and changed their clothes, at the recommendation of several agencies, including Region III (Chicago). The plane then continued on to Pittsburgh.

Several local emergency agencies also responded to the incident. A 'state of emergency' was declared by airport authorities, and all outbound air traffic was halted. All highway traffic to the airport was restricted to a single roadway.

Upon notification that the plane landed at the Pittsburgh airport, Regions I and III instructed U. S. Air and airport authorities to restrict access to the plane and baggage that may have come in contact with the generator package. After the passengers disembarked at Pittsburgh, the aircraft was isolated. Personnel from the State of Pennsylvania and Region I (Philadelphia) subsequently surveyed the aircraft and baggage and found no contamination. The plane was then released for unrestricted use.

DISTRIBUTION:

HEADQUARTERS OFFICES		REGIONS	MAIL TO:
Chairman Carr	NMSS	Region I	DCS (Orig)
Comm. Roberts	GPA:SLITP	Region II	DOT (Trans.
Comm. Rogers	GPA:PA	Region IV	Only)
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Gen. Counsel	Research		
NRR	IRM		
AEOD	ACRS		
Enforcement			

  

FAX TO:		
INPO	NSAC	LIC
NRC OPS CTR	12:58	
PDR (8/634-3343)	1:00	

\*Denotes a Displaywriter/PC not an IBM 5520 Terminal.

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The package remains at the Columbus airport. It will be examined on March 14, 1990, by a State of Ohio representative and a Region III inspector. Following the examination, it will be returned to Cintichem. A possible source of the fluid leakage is a bottle of a saline solution that is part of the generator apparatus.

The incident was monitored by NRC Headquarters, Region I, Region III, and a Department of Energy Representative. A telephone briefing of the Commissioner's Assistants was held at 11:30 p.m. on March 13.

Region III was notified of this incident by Headquarters Operation Center about 8:50 a.m. (EST) on March 13, 1990. This information is current as of 9 a.m., March 14, 1990.

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