

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-III-94-09

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.

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Licensee Emergency Classification</u>
Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District Easterly Plant Cleveland, Ohio	General Emergency Site Area Emergency Alert Unusual Event X Not Applicable

Non-licensee

Subject: COBALT-60 CONTAMINATION FOUND IN FILL AREA

On February 6, 1994, the NRC was notified that cobalt-60 (Co-60) contamination had been identified in a fill area at the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District's (NEORS) Easterly Plant. (Cobalt-60 contamination was previously identified by NRC at the NEORS's Southerly Plant. This facility has been placed in the Site Decommissioning Management Plan.) The contamination was identified during a survey conducted by a contractor hired by NEORS to evaluate the fill area. The survey was conducted to evaluate the area prior to planned excavation activities and to evaluate information obtained from NRC files relating to alleged dumping of radioactive material near the facility in the 1960's. This was the subject of an NRC inspection in February 1991 which did not identify any evidence of radioactive material near the site. The survey was conducted from November 24, 1993, through December 9, 1993, with the results of the survey provided to NEORS on January 25, 1994.

The survey identified six areas with elevated radiation readings ranging from 6000 counts per minute (CPM) to 60,000 CPM near the surface. Background readings were approximately 2500 CPM. Exposure rate readings at the surface ranged from 6 microRoentgens per hour to 18 microRoentgens per hour with background reading approximately 5 microRoentgens per hour. Two of the six areas identified with contamination showed potassium-40, a naturally occurring radionuclide, with no Co-60 identified.

The fill area has been used since the early 1900's to dump waste. This practice continued until the early 1970's. The Easterly plant dumped "grit" from its sewage treatment process in the area until approximately 1976.

Region III will obtain a copy of the consultant's survey report for review and determine further actions upon completion of this review.

A news conference was conducted on February 6, 1994, by the Mayor of the City of Cleveland and NEORS.

The State of Ohio has been notified of the above information. The information in this Preliminary Notification has been reviewed with NEORS management.

A NEORS representative informed the NRC Operations Center of the survey results on February 6, 1994. This information is current as of 8:00 a.m. (CST), February 7, 1994.

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