

August 27, 1990

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-90-28B

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 IV staff on this date.

FACILITY: Sequoyah Fuels Corporation
Gore, Oklahoma
Docket: 40-08027
License: SUB-1010

Licensee Emergency Classification:
 Notification of Unusual Event
 Alert
 Site Area Emergency
 General Emergency
 Not Applicable

SUBJECT: AUGMENTED INSPECTION TEAM DISPATCHED TO SEQUOYAH FUELS

As discussed in PNO-IV-90-28 and A, dated August 23 and 24, 1990, respectively, Sequoyah Fuels Corporation notified Region IV that uranium contaminated water has been discovered seeping into an excavation near the solvent extraction building. The concentration of uranium in the seepage ranged up to 8 grams per liter, about 35,000 times the licensees environmental action level for uranium in water.

Based on the results of preliminary information obtained from a Region IV inspector dispatched to the site on August 23, 1990, the Regional Administrator has chartered an Augmented Inspection Team (AIT) to review the circumstances surrounding this contamination event and to inform NRC management concerning the factual information it obtains.

The AIT will be led by Mr. E. F. Hawkins of Region IV's Uranium Recovery Field Office and should arrive at the site on the morning of August 27, 1990. Mr. A. Bill Beach, Director of Radiation Safety and Safeguards, will accompany the team and provide management oversight of the AIT response. The AIT is planned to complete its initial fact gathering at the site on August 31, 1990, with a report to be issued within 30 days of that date.

Representative Mike Synar of Oklahoma, in a letter addressed to Chairman Carr dated August 24, 1990, requested an NRC investigation of this situation. He held a press conference in Tulsa, OK on August 24, 1990, to express his concern regarding the potential for ground water contamination at the facility. Region IV has briefed Representative Synar's staff and plans to keep them informed, through the Office of Congressional Affairs, as the AIT progresses. Region IV informed the Environmental Protection Agency Office in Dallas, TX of this situation on August 24, 1990.

The state of Oklahoma is aware of the event.

The licensee has issued a press release. NRC has responded to media inquiries.

This information has been confirmed with a licensee representative.

CONTACT: T. P. Gwynn, 728-8182.

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TPGwynn:cd RDMartin
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(5520: *8/27/90 @ 9:15*
Regions & HQ)