

February 8, 1983

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-II-83-09

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 II staff on this date.

FACILITY: Georgia Institute of Technology
Irradiation Facility
State of Georgia Licensee
Atlanta, Georgia

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

SUBJECT: MEDIA INTEREST IN MINOR EVENT

Officials of Georgia Institute of Technology's Nuclear Research Center will hold a news conference at 11:00 a.m. (EST) today in Atlanta to announce an inadvertent release of 70 microcuries of Cobalt-60 to the city sewer system which had occurred on the evening of January 31.

The release occurred from the university's irradiation facility which is licensed by the State of Georgia. The event was the subject of a February 1 daily report, and the Office of State Programs was informed.

Officials say the release occurred from a pool used to store Cobalt-60 sources utilized at the center to conduct equipment environmental qualification tests.

On January 31, workers were involved in cleaning algae from the pool through use of an algaecide. The algaecide did not filter properly, resulting in crud buildup. A flocculating agent was introduced to facilitate filtering, and filter system pumps were turned off overnight.

On February 1, personnel entering the pool area noticed that the water had drained down three feet in the pool. It was determined that a valve on the closed filter loop had been left open, creating a syphon effect which drained 2,700 gallons of water down to a discharge three feet below the pool top. When the water drained down to the discharge, the syphon was broken and no further water escaped.

The release exceeded the licensee's administrative limit but was well below release limits imposed by the State of Georgia. There was no danger to public health or safety.

The State of Georgia was immediately notified by the licensee. The NRC regional office was informed and offered to assist if requested.

Media interest occurred on February 7 when the campus newspaper inquired about the event. Neither the university nor the State plans to issue a formal news release. Further local media interest is anticipated.

This PN is being issued for information purposes only. Region II plans no further action.

Region II (Atlanta) received initial notification of this occurrence by telephone from from the State of Georgia at 9:00 a.m. (EST) on February 1.

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PDR I&E
PNO-II-83-009 PDR

This information is current as of 10:00 a.m. (EST) on February 8.

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