

EVENT-CONTINUED

A wash trough, located in the RCA but draining to the sanitary system, has been used since 1978 for decontaminating respirators and similar items. The sink clogged up and maintenance personnel clearing the drain suspected it did not drain to a radioactive waste system. The sink was placed out of service until the drain path could be verified (and is still out of service). On September 13, the sink was verified to be piped to the sanitary sewer system. It should be noted that the plant staff has isolated this sink several times when the radioactive waste holdup tanks were near full due to their conviction it drained to that system. Before December, 1979 the sink drained to a septic tank. During times of heavy usage such as outages, the tank liquid contents were pumped out and dumped by a contractor in an EPA approved site. Since that time the system has gone to an on-site sewage treatment plant. Twice, loads of sludge from the plant settling tank have been disposed of in the same manner.

The sewage plant effluent is routinely sampled and has shown less than MDA. The sewage plant appears to be very effective at settling out and thus concentrating any particulate/insoluble activity.

CAUSE-CONTINUED

The design assumed the sink would be used for personal cleanup only, as are similar sinks in locker rooms and machine shops. The present Health Physics staff was informed that the radioactive waste systems were traced by their predecessors. (There was essentially 100% turnover in the HP staff between startup in 1976 and 1978 when the sink was first normally used for decontamination.) This sink is out of service and the drain will be rerouted before any further use. Other similar facilities in the RCA have been verified to be properly routed. Floor drains in the RCA are being physically verified. It should be noted that this was a design error and the other drains are shown on design drawings to be properly routed. The contractor's dump site has been surveyed by company, state, and NRC personnel. Detailed surveys are still in progress. Some dirt has been removed (about 6 inches from an area 20 by 60 feet) and spot removals are continuing. Using the (state's) highest reported value (to date) for the removed area, it contained about 0.001 curie. Spectral analysis to date indicates the majority of the activity is (insoluble) cobalt 60 which presents no leaching or transport hazards. Pond and ground water samples showed no activity above background and no cobalt 60.

A follow-up report will be issued.